

Kent on Sunday

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GOODBYE

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what Sundays were all
about



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It's been an absolute privilege to serve you all

BEING made redundant isn't a pleasant experience. But, strangely, my own personal plight pales into insignificance when it comes to the closure of this newspaper.

When I became editor five years ago, it was an appointment I had long dreamt about. I was walking in the footsteps of previous editors I admired and felt a heavy duty of responsibility to continue not only their good work, but the sterling efforts of everyone who had played their part in creating this special title.

Even now, writing this, the very last article, in the very last KoS, my sorrow at its demise and the end of a significant piece of local media history here in Kent, overshadows all other emotions.

Kent is, was, and always will be, a truly remarkable place to live and work. Its rich tapestry of people, cultures and landscapes is woven from historic roots



Editor **Chris Britcher**

which continue to define and direct it today.

KoS has always been alert to that and it flavoured our approach to everything. We have always been cautious to ensure our reporting was accurate and balanced. We never wanted to tell you how to think on key issues - but just to lay out the sides of the argument so you can reach your own conclusion. I still believe that is a more enriching path for both reader and writer.

You'll hopefully forgive a rather self-indulgent final edition, with some ex KoS staff telling their stories

inside. Because, ultimately, while the closure of this newspaper is a disappointment to many of you, it is devastating to those who worked so hard to try and make it something special. So goodbye and good luck Kent. As a previous editor says inside, I hope you've enjoyed KoS as much as we've enjoyed creating it for you.

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County town metro link to the capital is derailed

By Tom Pyman
Reporter

THE full introduction of new rail services from Maidstone into central London has been delayed by up to a year, the Whitehall spending watchdog has said.

A metro-style timetable linking the county town to the capital was scheduled to be in place by the end of next year, but the National Audit Office (NAO) revealed this has now been pushed back until December 2019.

The Thameslink services were set to run via London Bridge, Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon, St Pancras and on to Cambridge with journey times to London Bridge expected to be between 53 and 55 minutes, running half-hourly all day, Monday to Saturdays.

Most of the trains would terminate at Maidstone East ensuring passengers starting their journey to the city would be assured of a seat.

However, the delay was announced this week after the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail failed to make



FRUSTRATION: The Thameslink rollout has been pushed back until December 2019

adequate arrangements to manage the launch of the new services, the NAO said, with Maidstone Borough Council leader Fran Wilson left furious.

"This is extremely disappointing news and I will be lobbying this issue on behalf of our residents and businesses," she said.

"Despite being the county town of Kent we appear to be the last town on the train service list.

"I am certain everyone in the

borough will join me in saying this is completely unacceptable."

The DfT approved a proposal it had requested from Govia Thameslink Railway - which operates trains on the affected routes - to increase services more gradually in order to "manage the risks of each service change", the report stated.

A DfT spokeswoman said: "We welcome the NAO's findings that the Thameslink programme will deliver significant benefits for

passengers and supports the recent decision to gradually introduce new services to protect passengers from disruption."

Chris Gibb, chairman of the Thameslink Programme Industry Readiness Board, said: "By phasing the introduction of the new timetable in this way, we have front-loaded the benefits for passengers and then spread further changes in such a way that they can be more reliably introduced."

Jobs blow for 650 after investment firm says it plans to close office

HUNDREDS of workers in the west of the county face relocation to Surrey after an investment management company announced plans to close its Kent office.

Fidelity International said it would close the Tonbridge site in 2020, with the aim of moving the majority of employees and roles to its existing office in Kingswood - 25 miles away - following a consultation period for affected workers, which is set to commence in January.

Tonbridge and Malling MP Tom Tugendhat said: "It is really disappointing news that Fidelity International will close their local office and relocate around 650 jobs to Surrey.

"They are an excellent company who have supported the local community well over a long period of time, employing many local people.

"I've spoken to the managing director as this decision will have huge consequences for Hildenborough, Tonbridge and the surrounding area.

"A consultation on the transfer will begin in January and I would urge all employees to contribute. It is worth noting that the changes do not take place until 2020 so we have a chance to prepare. Having said that, I'm disappointed with the news."

Managing director Peter Horrell said: "We have to work in different ways to deliver for our clients and that includes being more efficient, more collaborative and working with more flexibility.

"We believe it is much easier to achieve this with one suburban site rather than have our infrastructure and our staff spread across two."

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council leader Nicolas Heslop added: "I have spoken at length with Peter Horrell to understand how the firm will support staff but also offer any assistance that the borough council can provide.

"We will of course work with them to minimise the impact of their intended relocation."

Last chance for archive before website closes too

JUST a reminder that not only will Kent on Sunday cease publishing this weekend, but so too will our website - www.kentnews.co.uk.

The site will remain live until the end of this month - so if there are back copies or cuttings you wish to retrieve from our free online archive, now is the time to do it.

You can currently revisit editions from the last 10 years of KoS - so

you can relive the highs and lows of life in the county.

Also, remember our office shut down for the final time on Friday, after this edition have been sent to the printers, so please do not send mail or letters to either our various email or office address.

All queries should be directed to Archant's Barking office in Essex on 020 8478 4444.

Surely there's snow chance of the white stuff today?

FORECASTERS say there's the possibility of snow this weekend as a cold snap spreads in from the north.

After a blustery week, during which wind warning were issued for the county on Wednesday, the Met Office says temperatures will drop further on Saturday and Sunday - with a chance of some of the white stuff.

A Met Office spokesman said: "It will be a cold weekend with some showers, occasionally wintry."

Temperatures will struggle to get above six degrees for most of us.

And while it may be more rain than snow for the south east, the forecast for next week is looking chilly too, with temperatures remaining low.



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Historic St Peter's Church bells to be silenced

THE bells at a Sandwich church which have rang out for centuries are to be silenced following a noise complaint from one neighbour.

Thousands of campaigners signed a petition urging the local council to retain the traditional chimes at St Peter's Church which ring every 15 minutes.

But the council said it has "a statutory duty to

investigate noise complaints" and served a night-time noise abatement order this week.

South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay, whose constituency includes the town of Sandwich, said: "I have already contacted appropriate ministers over this matter and will continue the fight, with local residents and campaigners, to get common sense to prevail."

Funding bid submitted for 100 student places at planned medical school

By Tom Pyman

Reporter

PLANS for a medical school in Kent moved a step closer this week after the county's two major universities joined forces to submit an ambitious bid for government funding.

The bid, for 100 medical student places, submitted by the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church, is part of a collective ambition to establish a school to address a drastic shortage of doctors, particularly in the east of the county.

The crisis has perhaps most acutely been felt in Canterbury, with the city hospital unable to accommodate dozens of patients attending by ambulance with conditions such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia, and instead diverting them to the William Harvey in Ashford and the QEOM in Margate.

This policy, which health chiefs insist is only temporary, but has been in place since June, are the result of the trust struggling to recruit



BID: Kent needs more doctors

enough permanent consultants, though some vacancies have been filled in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, a major GP surgery in Folkestone closed its doors for good earlier this month, sparking fears of

increased pressure on A&E departments in other areas of the county.

The universities say the bid draws on the complementary strengths of both institutions, and if successful, will be an essential cornerstone for the ongoing development of the school, with the first students planned for 2020.

Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, vice-chancellor and principal of CCCU, and Professor Karen Cox, vice-chancellor and president of the University of Kent said: "We would like to thank all those who have worked with us to develop this highly ambitious and innovative bid, developed in partnership with the Kent & Medway NHS Trusts.

"If it succeeds, it will kick-start the process of transforming medical provision in the region."

The bid has received significant support from the region's MPs, local councillors, NHS trust chief executives and medical directors, as well as other health and education related organisations, with the outcome set to be announced in March.



COUPLE: Pair wed 20 years ago

Bake Off star confirms split with his wife

TV STAR Paul Hollywood and his wife Alex are separating after nearly 20 years of marriage.

The Great British Bake Off judge and his wife, who live near Canterbury, issued a joint statement which read: "It is with sadness that we have decided to separate.

"Our focus continues to be the happiness of our son, and we would ask the press and public to allow us privacy as a family during this very difficult time."

Paul and Alex, also a chef, married in 1998, and they have a teenage son together. They previously separated in 2013 when the TV chef admitted to having an affair with Marcela Valladolid, his co-star on the US version of Bake Off.

They couple reconciled a few months later and he described the incident as "the biggest mistake of my life" in an interview with BBC Radio 5 live at the time.

The 51-year-old baker will return as a judge for the second series of Channel 4's The Great British Bake Off next year.

Mr Hollywood, who ran an artisan bakery business in Aylesham for several years, was the only original member of the Bake Off team who followed the show from the BBC last year.

He admitted in an interview this week it made him "the most hated man in the country".

MP calls for tougher steps over drug use

SOUTH Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay has demanded tougher penalties for drug pushers a zero-tolerance rehabilitation programmes for addicts.

Speaking to the health minister, Philip Dunne, in a parliamentary debate on Wednesday on the financial and human costs of drug dependency, the MP called for reform of our approach to drug dealing and taking.

The Conservative MP, chairman of the all party parliamentary group on cannabis, said: "Drug misuse and addiction damages physical and mental health, and ultimately causes death. We must do all we can to combat this scourge in society.

"We need better education with an emphasis on drug prevention available to our young people. Secondly, we need stricter penalties for drug dealers. Thirdly, we need a greater emphasis on abstinence-based rehabilitation centres for addicts – and in the knowledge that every £1 spent on drug treatment saves £2.50 in costs to society."

Universities packing a big financial punch

MEDWAY's three universities contribute more than £143.6m to the local economy and support at least 1,200 full time jobs across the district, according to latest research.

The University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church and the University of Greenwich, which share a campus at Chatham Maritime, are also responsible for 'economic impact' worth a further £234.7m across the south-east, sustaining the equivalent of more than 1,500 full-time jobs.

The economic impact research was undertaken by higher education specialists, Viewforth Consulting Ltd, on behalf of the three Medway partners, using figures for 2015/16.

More than 10,500 higher education students are currently based at Chatham Maritime, as well as several hundred members of staff.

Professors David Nightingale and Martin Snowden of the universities' campus management board, said: "The three partners have already made a major contribution and this is set to grow in the future."

Former pub set to be replaced with homes

PLANS to build new homes on the ground where the Battle of Britain pub in Northfleet once stood have been put forward to Gravesend council.

The popular pub was demolished overnight in October 2016, sparking outrage from regulars.

But with a previous housing application for 25 homes withdrawn in July, developers have said the current proposal will be able to fix the "eyesore" that has been left on Coldharbour Road.

Caldecotte Group has put forward renewed plans for 20 homes, featuring five four-bedroom houses, five three-bedroom houses, four one-bedroom flats and six two-bedroom flats.

Paul Sturgess, managing director of the development group, said: "This is a well thought out plan which has been developed in discussion with planners."

However, campaigner Tina Brooker said: "We keep hearing from the government how we need to look after our traditional pubs, that's exactly what the Battle was, but we've lost it to building new homes."

RiverOak delays plans over future of Manston into 2018

By Tom Pyman

Reporter

THE firm trying to turn Manston Airport into an air freight hub will now not present its plans to the government until the new year.

RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) had planned to submit a development consent order (DCO) for the site, owned by bosses behind the Stone Hill Park project, this autumn, but have now decided to launch a fresh consultation into its proposals.

Issues the firm will consult on include areas of environment assessment and a proposed noise mitigation plan, after admitting earlier this year there would be some night flights as part of its scheme, much to the frustration of some residents under the flightpath.

Director George Yerrall said: "We have been busy considering the 2,200 responses received to the consultation that took place in June and July 2017, which followed the non-statutory consultation in June 2016, and at the same time our plans have undergone further development.

"We are also taking the opportunity to update our environmental assessment in line with the latest EU directive, in respect of which we will also welcome comments."

Consultation events are set to be held in



AIRPORT: More on issues impacting on Thanet on page 12

Ramsgate and Herne Bay in January before further engagement later in the year.

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale said: "It is important, I think, that those opposed to the re-opening of Manston Airport are given every opportunity to appreciate the difference between the environmental impact assessments carried out by RiverOak and what I believe to be the cavalier attitude towards the environmental damage that would be caused by a massive housing and industrial estate proposed by others.

"More haste can sometimes lead to less speed and it is essential that genuine, if misplaced, concerns are, insofar as is possible, allayed."

Stone Hill Park, which held consultation events on its own proposals this week, said its scheme "will not destroy acres of countryside but instead will answer Thanet's housing need; boost the district's economy, and ensure the former airport site isn't turned into a white elephant for years to come."

Hate crime reporting hubs in communities

AN initiative where people can report hate crimes through community volunteers has launched in Medway.

The reporting hubs will allow people to report hate crimes through trained volunteers in a confidential environment within the community without having to talk to the police first.

Groups involved include mosques, arts cafes, charities and day service centres.

Probe after blaze at Gillingham home

AN investigation has been launched into the cause of a house fire which left a man hospitalised.

Crews were called to Balmoral Road in Gillingham just before 10pm on Tuesday night. The casualty was treated for breathing in smoke before being passed to the care of paramedics.

Landlord 'murdered'

DETECTIVES have launched a murder investigation after a pub landlord was killed in a shooting in Folkestone.

Joe Daniels, 58, was found dead inside the Red Cow pub in Foord Road, shortly before 11.30am on Wednesday.

Anyone with information is urged to call 01843 222289, quoting reference 22-0452.

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Martello Tower in car park goes under auction hammer

A 19TH century fort in Dymchurch which helped defend Kent against possible French invasion goes under the hammer next month.

The historic Martello Tower 25, built in 1806, has been listed for auction by Clive Emson, the land and property auctioneers.

The building has been earmarked as suitable for conversion into a residential building, as long as all necessary consents are available. It is sited in the centre of a seaside car park just yards from the shoreline.

Martello towers were built during the 19th century, standing up to 40 feet high, typically with a garrison of one officer and between 15 and 25 men. Their round structure and thick walls of solid masonry made them resistant to



cannon fire, while their height made them an ideal platform for a single heavy artillery piece.

The tower is being offered with a freehold guide price of £70-75,000. Auctioneer Kevin Gilbert said:

"This is one of those very quirky lots that doesn't come onto the market very often."

The sale takes place at the Kent Showground at Detling on December 11.

Jailed for knife, glass bottle and scissor attack

A 28-year-old man from Dover who admitted attacking his victim with a glass bottle, a knife and a pair of scissors has been jailed for seven and a half years.

William Hicks, formerly of Maison Dieu Road, had initially denied carrying out the assault at a house in Dover on March 3. But at Canterbury Crown Court this week he changed his plea and admitted a charge of wounding with intent.

The 20-year-old victim was with friends at the house in Leighton Road when he was introduced to Hicks for the first time. At about 6am Hicks started talking about wanting to commit a robbery or burglary. At the same time the victim happened to be texting his mother, who lives abroad.

Hicks accused the younger man of 'snitching on him' but calmed down when the victim showed him the messages on his phone.

A short while later the victim went to leave the house but was stopped by Hicks, who hit him over the head with a vodka bottle, then attacked him with a knife and pair of scissors and threatened to kill him.

The victim's friends intervened and the victim managed to escape. He was treated in hospital for a puncture wound to his right arm and numerous cuts to his arms and head.

Detective constable Stephanie Capaldi said: "This was a violent and unprovoked attack on a victim who had done nothing to deserve such treatment."

Industrial building blaze

CREWS were called to a fire at an industrial building in Canterbury on Thursday.

Firefighters used a hose reel to tackle the blaze involving some timber cladding and small part of the roof.

There were no injuries and the cause is not known.

Progress at cathedral

A MAJOR milestone in the £24.7m development of Canterbury Cathedral has been reached with new lead panels set to be installed onto the roof of the nave. The scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and donations, is the cathedral's biggest restoration project in recent history.

Surrender your guns

A TWO-WEEK amnesty on firearms and ammunition across Kent comes to an end today (Sunday).

The scheme means those handing in guns to their local police station will not face prosecution for illegal possession and can remain anonymous.

15 years for rapist

A RAPIST who subjected his victim to a decade-long string of abuse and controlling behaviour has been jailed.

Kieron Hoddinott, 41, of Church Field in Snodland, raped and sexually assaulted a woman multiple times over nine years and was sentenced to 15 years on Thursday.

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Dreamland bounces back

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

DREAMLAND bosses are set to unveil a host of new rides for the park next year as the firm which operates the venue officially exited administration this week.

The park went into administration in May 2016 after its relaunch the previous year failed to pull in the required number of visitors and its future started to look bleak.

But a £25 million investment earlier this year revitalised the park, with space for live music and performances created plus more food and drink options. The entry price was also scrapped and instead rides were offered on a pay-per-ride basis.

At the time, the administrators said the investment would be designed to make it more attractive for a prospective buyer.

Now Sands Heritage Ltd, which operates the site, has undergone a corporate reorganisation which it claims will ensure the park is on a strong footing for the future.

And that will mean more investment ahead of the 2018 summer season with more attractions coming in.

The phased expansion planned for Dreamland includes the addition of more rides in 2018 to cater for families and thrill-seekers alike and will see the events programme grow exponentially throughout the year.



BOOMING: Dreamland has undergone major improvements since it fell into administration in May 2016

Jennie Double, commercial director at Dreamland Margate said: "Exiting administration is great news for both the organisation and for the re-generation of Margate."

"It means that we can look forward with real confidence as we continue to deliver the Dreamland experience to our guests."

"We are really excited for the future and we are building strong foundations across the entire business. This includes increasing our permanent team, which also contributes to our positive effect on the local economy."

"Dreamland is committed to delivering even more events in 2018 and this, together with an increased ride line-up, will ensure that we are widely recognised as a unique entertainment venue in the south east."

By going into administration, companies see accountants parachute in business experts to either turn a business around or to prepare it ready for sale or closure.

SAUNDERS has been jailed for pinching a pack of Jaffa Cakes in Dartford. John Saunders, of Tennyson Avenue in Canterbury, broke into The Foresters pub in Great Queen Street last month, taking the biscuits and cigarettes.

After breaking into the pub, Saunders tried to break into a nearby business in East Hill, but couldn't open its tills. He was then spotted and arrested.

PC Peter Hyland said: "Rather than enjoy his stolen treats Saunders will now experience the bitter taste of a prison sentence."

More than he could chew

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John Saunders, of Tennyson Avenue in Canterbury, broke into The Foresters pub in Great Queen Street last month, taking the biscuits and cigarettes.

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PC Peter Hyland said: "Rather than enjoy his stolen treats Saunders will now experience the bitter taste of a prison sentence."

'Snatched' duo found safe

TWO children reportedly "snatched" in Wainscott on Tuesday morning, sparking a major police alert have been found safe and well.

A police helicopter was spotted swooping over north Kent throughout the day as officers stepped up their hunt for the children, who were believed to be with a relative.

Police revealed overnight that they had been found but declined to release further information.

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GB TOURS

Budget's big Brexit vow eases fears but councils left waiting

By Tom Pyman
Reporter

PHILIP Hammond's budget this week received a typically mixed reaction from the county, as he announced investment in Brexit preparations but little good news for struggling councils.

While the abolition of stamp duty for first-time buyers purchasing homes under £300,000 and its knock-on effects dominated discussion in the immediate aftermath of Wednesday's Commons statement, the vast sums made available for complications in leaving the European Union may be what it is best remembered for - particularly here in Kent.

The chancellor had been under pressure from Eurosceptics to make funds available to prepare for a "no deal" outcome, to show Brussels the UK is serious about its threat to walk away from talks if there is not a satisfactory offer on the table.

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke has

long called for at least £1 billion to be invested in the county's roads and borders, to help prevent the kind of queues and delays many are fearing will be a regular occurrence once Brexit becomes a reality in March 2019.

The government has come under fire in recent months, accused of not providing enough certainty or direction on how business should prepare for the impact of leaving, including in a recent panel discussion chaired by Mr Elphicke himself.

One former Border Force chief even admitted he wasn't sure all the necessary processes would be in place in just 18 months' time, such was the delay in getting a Brexit programme established.

However, Mr Hammond's announcement this week that some £700 million had already been invested in preparations for leaving the EU, with a further £3bn set aside for "every possible outcome" over the next two years, was widely welcomed.

Mr Elphicke said: "This is fantastic



CHANCELLOR: Philip Hammond's budget included lots for Brexit...but precious little for local government

news. It's vital we are ready on day one for every eventuality of leaving the European Union, deal or no deal.

"Being prepared strengthens our hand in the negotiations with the EU. And our borders systems need upgrading anyway.

"That's why I've been calling for the government to invest now - particularly at the Dover frontline. We must be ready on day one of Brexit to keep traffic moving through the Channel ports."

The £3bn funding will be spread equally over the next two financial years, however precise details about what exactly that investment will entail are sketchy at this early stage, with the government saying departmental allocations for Brexit preparations are not to be agreed until

early 2018.

Ahead of these allocations, government departments will continue to refine their 2018/19 plans, working alongside the treasury and the Department for Exiting the European Union.

Details of additional departmental funding for 2018/19 will be set out as part of the supplementary estimates process - which is where the government asks parliament for additional resources over the course of the financial year.

Allocations for 2019/20 will be agreed further down the line, "when there is more certainty on the status of our future relationship with the EU", the treasury said.

Mr Hammond said subsequently: "The sum of £3bn is the amount we estimate we will need, and that's based on the initial estimates we have received from departments, but if we need more we will find more.

"This is not an optional piece of expenditure, we have to do this to be prepared for when we leave the European Union.

"We don't want to see chaos at our ports or at our airports because we haven't prepared for the new arrangements that we will have in place."

He added: "We are going to need new arrangements and facilities at the border, we are going to need new computer systems for clearing goods through customs and so on.

"We have to make these arrangements and these investments to make sure that things are operating smoothly, that trade and business is not disrupted.

"These are sensible investments to make and we have to be prepared for a range of possible outcomes from these negotiations."

However, the omission of anything of note for local government was not something that went unnoticed by those at County Hall.

With central government grants drying up year-on-year, Kent County Council has long lobbied for more

funding and warned earlier this year there will soon be "a day of reckoning" when frontline services can no longer be protected.

KCC was boosted by a £26m cash injection for adult social care in the chancellor's last budget, but even then leader Paul Carter admitted it wasn't enough to solve the county's growing crisis.

As a result, the council fears it will need to make a series of severe cuts over the next two or three years, with council tax again expected to rise by some four per cent when the document is officially rubber-stamped in February.

Cllr Carter told KoS he was disappointed at the lack of support announced by the chancellor this week, but remained "cautiously optimistic" that some relief would be provided in the local government settlement, which is set to be revealed just before Christmas.

"Our budget is out to consultation and there are changes to services for the first time which, for me, is disappointing," he said.

"We didn't come into local government to downgrade services, we try to improve them and make the money go further.

"We've certainly done that, but eventually you are going to hit the bottom, so any help we get in addition will be very well received."

Elsewhere in the budget, campaigners celebrated the cancellation of fuel duty rise for both petrol and diesel which had been scheduled for April.

Howard Cox and Quentin Willson of the Cranbrook-based FairFuelUK campaign said: "We are pleased that the chancellor has understood the debilitating effect of raising fuel duty on consumers, households, businesses and the broad economy.

"He knows that now is not the time for gesture politics and that's why he's listened to the everyday anxieties of FairFuelUK's 1.5 million supporters and continued the duty freeze."



DOVER: Hopes Brexit funding will help ease any possible congestion once we leave the EU

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Power clash as Gale and Wells fire latest salvos

Delays to Thanet's local plan and the on-going row over housing allocations have sparked another war of words

By Tom Pyman
Reporter

THANET North MP Sir Roger Gale has accused the Ukip-controlled district council of "blundering incompetence" after the government threatened to intervene in its local plan process.

The local authority was publicly slammed by communities secretary Sajid Javid for not meeting deadlines in approving its plan, which is produced to provide clarity to communities and developers about where homes should and shouldn't be built.

The ongoing tug-of-war over the future of the Manston Airport site has delayed adoption of the plan, which went out to public consultation once again earlier this year.

The site is currently owned by bosses behind the Stone Hill Park project, who last week unveiled a fresh masterplan for the land, including 4,000 homes, business and leisure facilities as well as use of the site's runway for heritage aviation.

However, RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) have outlined ambitions to re-open Manston as an air freight hub and are pursuing a development consent order (DCO) to that end (see news page for update).

Last month, Thanet's cabinet agreed to allocate the site for mixed-use development - and not purely aviation use - in its local plan, which SHP described as "a victory for common sense".

The plan will now be taken to a full council meeting on January 18 for final approval, although a green light is by no means a foregone conclusion, with many councillors having openly expressed a desire to see the airport re-opened.

Regardless of the outcome in the new year, the cabinet noted that a successful DCO with compulsory acquisition powers would effectively over-ride the local plan anyway, and cited this as a further reason to progress with the current plan, before the government's planning inspectorate makes a final decision on RSP's impending application.

Council leader Chris Wells has been accused of reneging on a

pledge to bring planes back to Manston when his party swept to power in 2015, but he has long insisted the evidence provided in a report by Avia Solutions last year, which concluded airport operations were "unlikely to be financially viable", needs to be the basis of such a plan.

Conservative MP Sir Roger, therefore, predicts a rebellion in the council chambers will see the local plan process pushed back even further, thus running the risk of the government intervening and denying the town hall sufficient control over development in the coming years.

He said: "It is because of blundering incompetence and the failure of the controlling group and the leader of Thanet District Council to generate a local plan that reflects the wishes of the local electorate that has led [Mr Javid] to indicate that he will, if necessary, impose a plan upon Thanet.

"It is not, as some have sought to suggest, because of support for what has been wrongly described as 'a polluting air cargo hub'.

"Let us be clear. In successive parliamentary, county council and district council elections the people of east Kent have voted in overwhelming numbers for candidates that have supported - and in most cases continue to support - the re-opening of Manston Airport as a freight and passenger facility.

"That the Ukip leader of Thanet council, for reasons about which one can only speculate, has decided to renege on the clear undertaking, given in election material by [former Ukip leader and South Thanet candidate] Nigel Farage, that 'We Will Save Manston Airport' is a matter of regret.

"That Cllr Wells is now seeking to insert alternative uses into the local plan is, for the Conservative Party, for some Labour councillors and for Ukip councillors who wish to honour their election pledge, a sticking point.

"It is likely, therefore, and I personally hope that this will be the case, that unless Cllr Wells and his cabinet withdraw the proposed change of use for Manston Airport, then the local plan, when it is de-



ANGRY: Conservative MP Sir Roger Gale accuses Thanet council of 'blundering incompetence' Pic: ADY KERRY

bated and voted upon in early January of 2018, will be defeated and I would welcome the intervention, at that point, of the secretary of state."

In response, Cllr Wells urged the MP to provide evidence of where else in the district so many homes could be provided.

He said: "I read Sir Roger's comments with interest. He appears to be in direct conflict with his own government's agenda in advocating delay to the local plan process.

"I was, however, delighted to hear of his recent meeting with the housing minister, when Sir Roger ex-

plained that 'Thanet has more than sufficient brownfield land and other available sites to meet its local housing needs'.

"I am excited to hear such a simple solution is available to us. So please Sir Roger, list those sites where the housing your government wants for this area can go.

"That is all that anyone consulted really needs to know to make an informed choice about the Manston site. It's time to put up or shut up."

Among Sir Roger's concerns was the idea that the airport site would become "a dumping ground" for

London boroughs, rather than an opportunity for Thanet residents, if SHP's plans were to be rubber-stamped.

"Kent already has more than sufficient difficulties absorbing a once-again rising number of 'looked-after children' for which the London boroughs have failed to make provision without exacerbating the problem," he added.

SHP, however, dismissed his claims, insisting planning permission will be sought for a whole range of homes of different tenures, including market rate, retirement and starter homes, as well as a percentage of affordable housing that will be negotiated with the council in due course.

Mr Javid said in a written statement last week he was "particularly concerned" that Thanet - along with 14 other councils - was not complying with a public timetable imposed by his department.

"I am writing to give the local authorities the opportunity to put forward any exceptional circumstances, by January 31, which, in their view, justify their failure to produce a local plan under the 2004 Act regime," he added.

"I will take responses received into account before any final decisions on intervention are taken.

"The remaining authorities who are not making progress on their plan-making and fail to publish a plan for consultation, submit a plan to examination or to keep policies in plans up to date are on notice that consistent failure to make sufficient progress will no longer be tolerated.

"My department will begin formally considering the case for intervention as deadlines are missed."



DEFENCE: Chris Wells says MP should 'put up or shut up'



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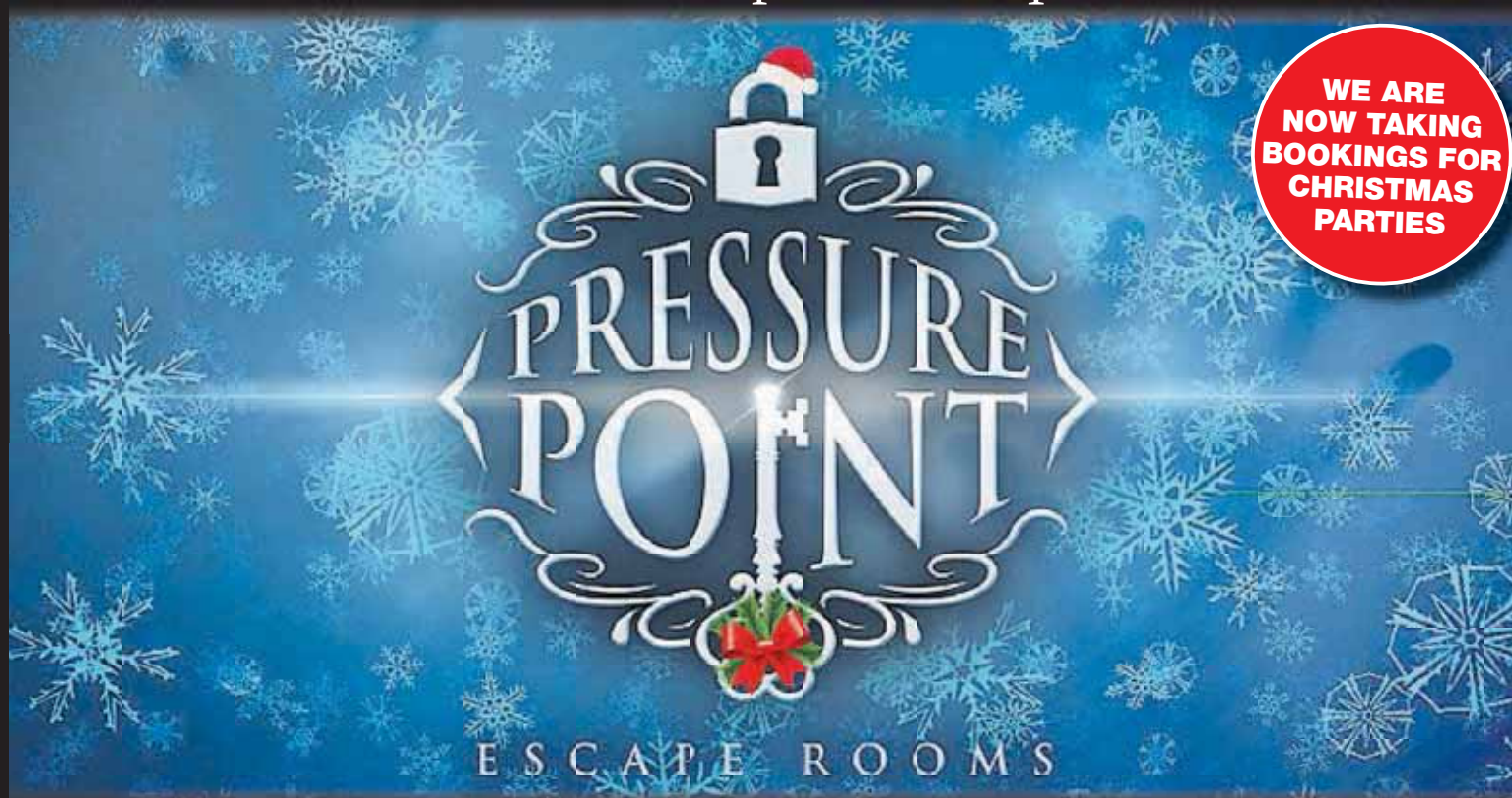
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KoS founder's hopes for future

Starting a string of special articles in this, our final edition, editor **Chris Britcher** speaks to the man who first hired him and who, in 2002, launched Kent on Sunday and saw its dramatic rise...and fall

FIVE years into its existence and KoS Media, as it was back then, was at the peak of its powers.

Its flagship title Kent on Sunday was winning awards left right and centre – both on a regional and national basis – and the advertising market was buoyant.

Back then, in 2007, the office was based in a large converted barn in Smeeth – perched amid fields and sandwiched by the A20 on one side and the distant roar of the M20 on the other. It had outgrown its initial home in Chartham years before.

During the summer the busy worker could catch a moment of respite outside and hear sheep baa-ing and birds tweeting and then scamper back inside again as local farmers started spreading the heady concoction of manure on the surrounding fields.

The fields around us were fertile – and so was the company.

After the success of KoS, the decision was made to launch a whole series of local newspapers to serve towns across the county. The Your series (so the likes of Your Ashford, Your Canterbury, Your Maidstone and so on) was born and around 20 reporters recruited to spearhead titles which would embrace the brave new world of the web and online video as much as the written word.

The enormous car park suddenly became a challenge to get into such was the influx of staff – reporters, marketing, sales, admin, HR, you name it, they all flocked.

In the space of just five years, and with a standing start, KoS Media had gone from being a germ of an idea to one of the three major newspaper publishers in a crowded and highly competitive county.

But by 2010 a blend of politics and progress intervened and the KoS juggernaut suddenly found itself facing something of a dilemma – and it was far from alone.

“It was a perfect storm,” explains KoS founder Paul Stannard, “we had a government which had no money so all the public sector marketing and advertising – which would spread the word of their activities by advertising in the county newspaper – disappeared overnight.”

“Then you had the widespread take-up of high-speed broadband and the rise of devices like the iPad – all of which we were prepared for – and then you had the economic collapse.”

“On top of that, there were all these newcomers such as Facebook and Google. They didn’t have to produce any content, they just leveraged it from everyone else.”

“It meant we were putting all the money in to support content and the community and the income was going south.”

KoS was far from alone in feeling the cold wind of change through the media landscape.

Where once newspapers cashed in



BUSY: Since leaving KoS in 2012, Paul Stannard is now helping link up ‘smart innovation’ with ‘smart investment’.

with pages upon pages of job vacancies, property, motors, public notices and plenty more besides, suddenly there were dedicated national websites which vacuumed up the advertising spend.

Taken over by Archant in 2010 – silent investors in the company for a number of years – by 2011, the Your series of papers had become ‘online only’ – a sure sign of declining fortunes, and they would not survive much longer.

As the way we consume news changed, the challenge facing all local media was just how to plug the holes through which all that advertising revenue was tumbling.

Picking up a newspaper was no longer the primary source of news for so many. Picking up an iPad or checking on your phone could deliver all the headlines you need, locally and nationally, and without any money having to change hands. And declining sales and declining advertising meant every title – even the biggest national red-top tabloids – saw circulations drop and cutbacks occur.

A harsh reality for all businesses is that the workforce consumes such a sizeable amount of a company’s spend.

No area of the business was immune – sales teams tumbled and so did journalists.

once the KoS Media’s offices in Smeeth were packed to the rafters, the relocation into smaller offices in Ashford town centre was a sign of its declining fortunes.

By the time this last edition went to press on Friday, there were just four journalists left – writing not just Kent on Sunday but also Archant’s other titles, the Gravesend Reporter, Bexley Times and Bromley Times. Plus all the associated websites. We worked from an office we could barely squeeze into.

And it is that decline in journalists which Mr Stannard admits worries him the most.

He explains: “I wasn’t surprised to hear KoS was to close, because of what’s gone on with the industry.”

“KoS has outlasted dozens of other titles which have been there for 50 years so it doesn’t come as a surprise because you can see what’s been going on.”

“The challenge is if you don’t have great content providers then our democracy and our media will just be left with the search engines and Facebook who don’t produce quality content – so who’s going to stand up for the man in the street?”

“I went to an event once with an investment firm and they said the biggest opportunity is with local as 90 per cent of transactions are done locally. But local firms are facing huge challenges because of the economy.”

“The media is the perfect support mechanism for local business [to help promote them to their communities], and a lot has been said about media firms working closer with the local businesses, but they’re still not doing enough of it. And the problem is they’re running out of cash to do it.”

“Half the world’s online population now access the internet via the likes of Google and Facebook, but if you haven’t got any content providers there will come a breaking point.”

“If local media is being so dumbed down because of cutbacks, then that

quality isn’t going to be there.

“Not just in local media, but media in general.”

“Great, everyone can leave comments on stories now, but the quality journalism isn’t going to be there for them to comment on.”

“My message is that local businesses need a strong local media and local media need strong relationships with local businesses. Without it they will be dealing with global entities which have no understanding of local concerns.”

“Family business like Archant and the Kent Messenger Group started initially to help the communities they served. But today you need to be brave and have deep pockets. You can still make money out of local media – but it’s harder and you have to be more creative and that takes money and a bit of belief.”

“Local businesses need help – it’s never been more complicated to engage with local communities what with social media and all the different platforms. Who are the best people to make sense of all of that? It’s the local media, but their balance sheets aren’t as strong as they once were.”

Rest assured, there are plenty of very talented people still serving this county in the local media; lots of strong, powerful journalists who continue to work hard and seek to represent our communities. Lots of executives who know that content is king and as a result investment must be maintained.

But they will only be able to continue to do so with the support of readers and, most crucially, local advertisers who understand their worth and are not blinded by alternatives.

The media landscape has changed dramatically over the last 10 years, but whether it is online or printed products, there are still strong media outlets serving Kent – despite KoS’ closure. Be sure to support them, You really will miss them once they’re gone.



ENGAGE: Founder Paul Stannard, right, started KoS in 2002



FORMER HOME: KoS was based for many years at Apple Barn in Smeeth, just outside Ashford



KoS' success gave me proudest moment of my professional life

In a special article penned for this final edition, KoS' first editor, **Ian Patel**, looks back at its launch and how during his long spell as editorial director, it transformed the landscape for regional media

LIKE so many businesses, it started with a gap in the market and a simple idea – a free, editorially-led Sunday newspaper that would cover the whole county.

The credit for the creation of Kent on Sunday belongs with Paul Stannard, a veteran of the county's media industry who had pondered that gap in the market and decided to write a business plan.

Today good-quality free newspapers are commonplace, but in 2002 this was a revolutionary concept and we attracted industry-wide attention, and not a little derision.

Paul spent a couple of months putting together the team to deliver his vision – KOS Media needed salespeople, the distribution team, and I was brought in to head up the editorial department.

An impressive £2 million seed money was raised over the summer from family and friends to bankroll the launch.

All of this was done in the utmost secrecy; if we were to stand a chance of forcing our way into the crowded Kent media marketplace we needed the element of surprise.

If one of the established newspaper companies decided to launch a spoiler Sunday newspaper before us we could be dead in the water, and all our money wasted. Of course, rumours started to circulate – that was inevitable once we started to approach advertisers – but the competition decided to leave us alone

and so we were up and running.

The first edition was published on September 8, 2002, my wedding anniversary, but it was all hands to the pump and I spent the day wearing an oversized KoS T-shirt and handing out newspapers on the streets of Tunbridge Wells.

In those days free newspapers were traditionally hand delivered through people's letterboxes – a distribution method that would have ruined us financially within a month. Instead readers had to pick up their own paper from newsagents, garages, supermarkets, and anywhere else we could think of to drop a bundle of papers.

And we soon found there was a huge demand for our mix of hard news, features, sports, a colour supplement magazine, and a lively property section.

The truth is we couldn't print enough papers to meet the demand from readers. The more we printed, the more were picked up, and the number of unread copies was minimal.

The response really was incredible – many editors will tell you they get 10 complaints compared to every time someone says 'thank you' for a story – but we received dozens of calls and best wishes cards from members of the public thanking us for the paper.

My job title was 'editorial director', which was a grand title for someone whose full-time staff con-

sisted of sub editor Dave Hobday and editorial assistant Charlotte Wilson. I also had the invaluable help of two former Kent editors, Neil Clements and Jim Grove, freelance journalists I relied on for some months to help fill the news pages.

In all, the business started with around 20 staff across all departments and we were based in a converted farm building in Chartham outside Canterbury. Mary Hopper was in charge of the sales teams, Richard Purvis ran distribution, and Jason Pyne headed up the ad design service.

All were experienced Kent newspaper people, and their knowledge and contacts would prove crucial in dealing with the unforeseen problems that seem to appear every day.

The month leading up to the first edition was a whirlwind of activity with everyone putting in early starts and late nights – Richard and his right-hand woman Barbara Coker had to set up a distribution network from scratch, and Paul, Mary and her seconds-in-command Ynez Coton and Dean Headley, had to convince advertisers they wanted to part with their hard-earned cash to place adverts in a paper that didn't yet exist.

My job was to quickly develop some contacts, and try to make sure we had some stories people might actually want to read.

Over those first few years of KoS I was lucky to be involved in some ex-



BOSS: KoS' first editor - Ian Patel

for Kent but unfortunately for us, gun crime was actually declining.

Despite these bumps in the road, just two years after it was launched Kent on Sunday was named Newspaper of the Year in the Press Gazette regional press awards.

For many of us it was the proudest moment of our professional lives and capped the two happiest years of my career. I had never worked so hard in my life, but being part of a small, committed team determined to do something special and achieve the highest standards was a wonderful experience.

For a small start-up business, that was still based on a farm, to take on the huge companies that dominated the local press and end up winning the ultimate accolade was beyond all our wildest dreams.

Over the next dozen years the company grew, new products were launched, seven various awards were won in as many years, and of course more mistakes were made along the way.

There was also a recession, and the internet changed forever the way readers consume the news and how businesses present their goods and services to the public.

And now the story of Kent on Sunday is over and you are holding a copy of the last ever edition. I hope you have enjoyed reading the newspaper every week as much as we enjoyed producing it for you.

cellent work – fighting for better central government funding for Kent, leading the fight against plans for an international airport on the Hoo Peninsula, investigating what was going on behind closed doors at County Hall, and dozens more important issues.

We also made our fair share of mistakes of course, I particularly remember one story that gave completely the wrong advice for managing diabetes, and the time we ran a front-page story on rocketing gun crime.

However, the reporter had misunderstood the crime stats, and luckily

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KoS made a real difference

Former reporter **Jamie Weir** on why his time at the newspaper will always be remembered fondly

JOINING Kent on Sunday is easily one of the most memorable career moves I've ever made.

From working on the 'dark side' in local public relations, I jumped ship and, poacher turned gamekeeper, decided I wanted to use my skills to hold power to account.

I made the leap into the world of newspapers with what I felt was a solid appreciation of the importance of local news, and the very many skills a journalist requires.

With a robust understanding of the county's big players, and in-depth knowledge of topics such as planning, I straved into the world of regional journalism with something of a swagger.

It took just weeks for me to be cut down to size, as the gravity of developing the major stories KoS would break in every issue started to dawn.

It's not easy being a journalist on a local or regional title. There's a responsibility to consider every word typed, and dedicate real time and effort to ensuring the stories created are fair, balanced and accurate; something which present editor Chris Britcher, made an art form.

And while working as a local print journalist is far from easy, it's even less well paid. Subsisting on something equivalent to your average fast food service worker doesn't leave much for the petrol money you need to

make your way out into the communities which you serve, or the copious coffee emporium visits I made for a frequent caffeine fix.

But despite the many drawbacks, it's a job a huge number of clever, creative, inquisitive people aspire to, and a job which I personally utterly adore. It's easy to see why as well. With access to key figures throughout the county, and indeed, nationally, there's a feeling you're at the centre of what's taking place when history is being made.

During the general election in 2015 I covered the events of the night in South Thanet, also witnessing and reporting on Nigel Farage's subsequent, albeit temporary, exit from politics.

I did this while rubbing shoulders with huge news organisations like Reuters and the Financial Times. And what's more, because I understood the local angle, those very organisations were coming to me for advice.

We often forget it's the local newspapers which are the breeding grounds of the talented writers who end up progressing to the nationals. The ever diminishing pool of quality local and regional papers, like KoS, will, in time, lead to poor quality copy coming from those very nationals.

Throughout my time with KoS, I viewed the role of the local journalist as one in which we had a duty to report



WRITER: Jamie Weir

unfolding events in order to inform our communities. But in doing so, I always felt that I was able to help shape the outcomes, and play a part in making society that little bit better.

And that's what KoS has done so well through the years.

From my articles which held our former police and crime commissioner, Ann Barnes, to account, through to the more recent blood campaign which has raised not only questions in the House of Commons, but genuine action to help those affected by it.

KoS has always stood for community, and I felt privileged to play a part in serving the great county, and community, of Kent during my time writing for it.



QUIZ: Jamie Weir interviews government minister James Brokenshire in Westminster office

Unforgettable rollercoaster ride

You'll be familiar with his name, now Kent on Sunday's main reporter, **Tom Pyman** reflects on his life at the title

WHEN I joined the ranks here in September 2015 as an almost complete foreigner to the county, I had no idea of the huge role this newspaper would go on to play in my career and my life.

Kent on Sunday is unique. It's special.

A weekend paper is designed not only to round up the week's big headlines but to take the stories on further with an analytical eye. It challenges and asks why - or indeed why not - something is being said or done.

Certainly in my time here, KoS has done exactly that, and I'm immensely proud to have played a small part in it.

Every single the week the paper is packed with variety and intrigue - there are history pieces, political analysis and reports on the impact of multi-million-pound projects on regular people like you or I.

On top of dozens, if not hundreds, of articles on the future of Manston Airport and the Operation Stack lorry park (subjects I will no doubt be

following rigorously wherever the coming weeks and months take me), KoS has given me the chance to report on Robbie Williams helping a star-struck fan who crashed her car, the former soldier taken to court for doing his gardening stark naked, and how Chartwell House nearly drove Sir Winston Churchill to bankruptcy. Not to mention the thrill of reporting on this summer's general election and of course the many stories that emerged in the fall-out.

For me personally, it's been an incredible opportunity to develop my knowledge of subjects that affect the whole country, not just us in this beautiful corner of the south-east.

As time has gone on I've been lucky enough to be trusted with greater responsibility over how the paper is shaped on a weekly basis - experience that is absolutely invaluable to any young journalist.

Therefore it fills me with incredible sadness that this newspaper - respected and read county-wide despite



a hugely competitive field of local media - is to close for good this weekend.

None of us who go into this industry are naïve enough to think printed newspapers are going to last forever, and I'd be lying if I said the majority of the news I consume wasn't through social media or scanning news wires or even listening to the local radio station.

But there's still a lot to be said for picking up a traditional newspaper and browsing the stories over a cup of tea, and the changing media landscape doesn't make this title's closure any less sad.



BUSY: Tom Pyman, left, and quizzing Gillingham chairman Paul Scally above

Put simply, the county is worse off for not having Kent on Sunday available to pick up every weekend.

Before attending my job interview for this position, I think you could count on one hand my visits to Kent. But I leave the role this week with - I'd like to think, at least - a great understanding of the issues that are important to you, our readers, and a genuine affection for a county unlike

any other.

Naturally, it's brought its challenges: the tight deadlines, the MPs that hang up as soon as they recognise your voice and the landlords who will phone on a weekly, if not daily, basis to discuss curry-related policies. But it's all been part of a hugely satisfying and fulfilling time at Kent on Sunday, and I take away countless memories that I'll truly never forget.



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Why KoS campaign eased our suffering

For more than two years, KoS has campaigned on behalf of the victims of the contaminated blood scandal, developing close ties with victim **Steve Dymond** from Broadstairs and his wife **Su Gorman**. They explain what it meant to them.

On March 25, 2015, the then prime minister David Cameron made an apology to the victims of the contaminated blood scandal, which had seen haemophiliacs infected with deadly viruses including HIV, hepatitis B and C through NHS treatments with Factor VIII concentrates [a treatment given to haemophiliacs to allow their blood to clot properly for a temporary period].

He made three promises - a full apology, transparent publication and proper compensation. He also announced additional funds, which were to be made available immediately. To this day all these promises remain unfulfilled, leaving the apology hollow and meaningless.

The date of March 25 is a deep scar in our lives, being the anniversary of the death of Steve's haemophilic brother Howard from a post operative haemor-

rage. Howard was 15, Steve was 12.

Howard died a victim of the shame and stigma felt by many haemophilic families; his parents having not informed the hospital of his bleeding disorder. A shame and stigma which became intensified for a whole generation of haemophiliacs infected with socially unacceptable diseases by their routine NHS treatments.

On April 25, 2015 we attended the funeral of a haemophilic whose death had resulted from his contamination with hepatitis C from NHS Factor VIII. He and his family campaigned tirelessly for many years to bring this appalling saga and the devastation that wreaked on their lives to public awareness. Even, at his request, consenting to his death bed photos being used in the press.

Over 150 mourners, many of them

desperately unwell victims of the contaminated blood outrage, stood around his open grave beneath a leaden sky, soaked by squalls from across the Yorkshire hills. The solemn oath of the medical profession, 'first do no harm', and the highest calling of government to protect all citizens from harm and hardship were both absent.

The half-hearted apology a month previously made scant impact on the roughly hewn dry stone wall behind his grave.

On May 13, 2015 KoS made an appeal for families affected by the contaminated blood scandal to share their stories.

These events following so closely together convinced us to rethink our reticence to speak publically about how the contaminated blood scandal had devastated our lives and pushed us

UNITED: KoS first met Steve Dymond and his wife Su Gorman at their home in May 2015



to the edge.

In our battle with the fear of stigma, a tipping point had been reached.

Despite the uncertainty caused by

Steve's severely compromised health (notably the symptoms of chronic fatigue and extreme difficulty in concentrating) and with considerable trepida-

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tion, we met with Chris Britcher, the editor of KoS.

This first article appeared in the edition of May 24, 2015.

"This is just root and branch wrong!" came an exasperated exclamation from the editor as we unveiled in that first interview the effects the contaminated blood scandal had exercised on our lives, dreams, aspirations and well-being. His outrage at the way the haemophilic community had been betrayed and lied to by the state spoke eloquently of his compassion and decency. In that first article he had woven together the diverse strands of our lives into a tapestry where we could finally make sense of what had befallen us.

"On Margate sands, I can connect nothing with nothing" wrote TS Eliot in *The Waste Land* - here KoS had helped us make our own connections in our own desolate landscape.

Here, then, campaigning journalism comes into its own. For us - through intelligent, sensitive writing it has given form to what has been described as "a silent scandal taking place in plain view" and speaks truth to power.

Meeting with victims of this scandal in September this year, Bishop James Jones spoke of having to confront "the patronising disposition of unaccountable power" to obtain truth and justice from government.

This is the role that the Fourth Estate, the printed press, occupies.

Writing in 1837, Thomas Carlyle describes "A Fourth Estate, of able editors, springs up, increases and multiplies, irrepressible, incalculable."

Writing in December 2015, the KoS editor wrote of the contaminated blood scandal: "We will con-

tinue to highlight the issue as we go into 2016 and continue to ensure it doesn't fall off the radar." And speaking of the victims, he concludes "It's easy to think they are a small number, but their voice is loud and we will continue to ensure it is heard."

The impact of the KoS coverage of this scandal is such that local MP Craig Mackinlay for South Thanet referred to it directly in the House of Commons in December 2015: "This is a big subject in my part of Kent. It is trailed massively in the Kent on Sunday, which covers it regularly."

The ripple effect of KoS' regular coverage has gone still further. We have been solicited by local and national TV and radio who have only become aware of the significance of this scandal through KoS.

The haemophilic population being so small and spread across the entire UK, our contaminated blood community is of necessity an online one, which has a very effective presentation of any media coverage. Over the last 30 months our regular weekend postings of 'Kent on Sunday, page...' have always attracted comments from the four corners of the country, appreciating both the quality of the journalism and the generosity of the on-going and regular support. The announcement of the closure of KoS was greeted with sadness and dismay or, as the secretary of [campaign group] Tainted-Blood so eloquently summed it up, "Oh, no!"

It is with a deep sense of bereavement that we say farewell to the unstinting support and compassion shown by the KoS campaign for truth and justice for the victims of the contaminated blood scandal. And to editor Chris Britcher.

Akin to the marriage vow to be faithful to each other in sickness



and in health, this relationship has been a close one; although sickness has been inevitably the prevailing state. But with the conceding by the prime minister of a full public inquiry and the granting by the High Court of leave for haemophiliacs to sue their own government for compensation, we part company reluctantly but with the campaign in a healthier place.

A huge debt of gratitude is due both to KoS and its editor for influencing the campaign and bringing it to the attention of readers across Kent and beyond.

We are aware that are that there are many haemophilic families across Kent who live being victims of the contaminated blood scandal in shame, fear of stigma and silence. We hope that they know in speaking out it is as much for them as for ourselves and that they feel we have represented them in get-

ting this 'silent scandal' the public notoriety required for a decent outcome.

To be able to campaign meant accepting our 'victim status'; something we had always been unwilling to do. From our first contact with KoS we discovered that acceptance was both therapeutic and empowering. Something which lifted our lives away from the very dark place of suffering in poorly understood silence. And something we have been able to share through our campaign group with others hesitating about coming forward to talk to their own regional and local press.

Perhaps, after 40 years, the truth will out and the the living and dead haemophilic victims of the contaminated blood scandal and their families will be able to rest in peace.

KoS, editor Chris - you will be sorely missed.

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FINAL EDITION: 2002 - 2017

SINCE it was announced two weeks ago that Kent on Sunday was to close this weekend, we have received dozens of letters and phone calls from readers and long-time friends of the newspaper expressing their sorrow at our demise.

It has been a bittersweet experience knowing we were so well liked yet, albeit at the point of our impending doom. But then it is surely always the way?

We have always strived to serve you, our readership, and so it seems fitting that in this final issue, having had far too many letters to keep contained on our letters page (you can read more by turning to our very last letters' page in this edition) we ensure you have your say.

Sadly, by the time you've read this our office in Ashford will have closed for the final time - we finished at the point this paper went to press - so please don't email or write it as, unfortunately, no-one will be able to respond. Thank you for all your correspondence.

LOSING Kent on Sunday is like losing a friend.

Every week it provided an excellent summary of seven days in the life of our county and the standard of journalism, under pressure both social and financial, was excellent.

KoS will be much missed and our thanks to the editorial and advertising team that served this commu-



nity so well for so many years.

Peter Williams MBE,
Boughton-under-Blean

I would like to add a few brief comments to those made in the letters page in the penultimate edition of your newspaper.

Kent on Sunday has been a really excellently produced publication and both Kent and Sundays will be the poorer for its passing.

You will be sadly missed.

Richard Ablett,
Deal

THANKS for all the pleasure and information that your paper edition has provided to me and other readers in the past. We shall miss it!

John Dutton,

Tunbridge Wells

I was extremely disappointed on picking up my latest edition of KoS from Tesco, to learn that the next issue of this valuable local newspaper will be the last.

I am fortunate that at the age of almost 74 I am lucky that I have three adult children who can help me when I often have trouble with the internet.

However, going online is not the same as reading a newspaper, and there must be many senior citizens much older than me who have relied on you to keep them up to date with what was going on in our county, both serious and leisure.

I wish all of you at KoS my very best wishes for the future.

John Keeling
Ashford

MAY I also thank KoS for the brilliant coverage of local and national news over the years.

Our free copy is always available from our local newsagent. It will be sad to see it go from my regular Sunday read. Good luck to all your team for this excellent free product.

I have been honoured and privileged to see my photographs published in KoS and for this I say 'thank you'.

John Grand,
Wingham

REALLY sad to read that Kent on Sunday is to close - I could hardly believe what I was seeing.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

If KoS cannot survive

I WAS shocked and saddened by the recent news that Kent on Sunday and its associated online news service are to close this weekend.

Although a free paper, I have always considered Kent on Sunday as a high quality product, having been a regular reader since its beginning in 2002. This has been local journalism at its best, presenting reliable local information, news and comment, along with excellent sports coverage, and a variety of life style features.

KoS has surely been exceptional for a local free paper, in its willingness to provide such detail in its stories and campaigns, being prepared to devote up to three pages of news, analysis and

political insight to an issue for the thoughtful reader, rather than go for the fleeting headline for those with a low attention span.

Perhaps that has been its downfall but, on the way, it has secured many prestigious newspaper awards.

I have particularly enjoyed Chris Britcher's editorial comments, punchy, thought provoking, and not afraid to make strong political connections to local matters, again rare I suspect in such a local newspaper.

Many of you will be aware of KoS' support for my own information and campaigning articles in education, and over the years we have achieved notable successes together.

A call from the editor: "Yes,

I have always looked forward to getting the paper, it was well laid out and put together. Such a loss.

Karan Capon-Richards,
via email

WE were sad to hear that Kent on Sunday will shut at the end of the month.

We always enjoyed reading the

news of Kent - it kept us up-to-date with what was happening in our county.

We appreciated, particularly, your editorials which were illuminating and thoughtful. We will miss a good read when KoS is gone.

Veronica and Steve Tombs,
Newnham

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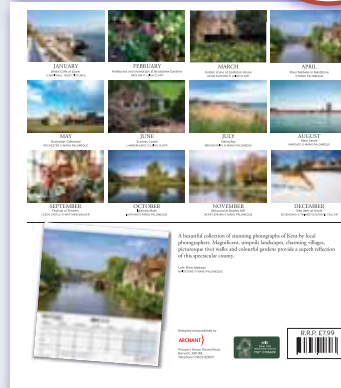
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then future looks bleak

this is important, I can give you 1,500 words" would be heart-warming indeed, with KoS offering a unique media outlet of information and independent advice on school admissions for parents, to pick just one example.

Although some years ago now, but probably having the biggest impact, KoS fronted my personal campaign to stop the closure of all Kent's special education units, then being pushed through by county officers.

This is an important area of education provision for vulnerable children, now being expanded by Kent County Council. I have been proud to be associated with you.

Of course, my own specialisation is just a small aspect of the coverage of Kent on Sunday, with

big local issues: Lorry parks, Manston airfield, the local impact of Brexit, hospital trust scandals, rail chaos, all receiving the KoS treatment, not forgetting the 'small but important issues' which would often be highlighted in some detail.

I could go on, but I hope my point is made. The Archant group took over KoS in 2010, and at present have 63 local titles across the country. If a newspaper with a record such as this cannot survive financially with many advertisers switching to the internet, the future certainly looks bleak for many others.

Kent on Sunday, you will be missed!

Peter Read
Education consultant, Gravesend

JUST writing to say how much I have enjoyed reading KoS over the years.

It's a great shame it is coming to an end.

Paul St Martin,
Chatham

I WAS shocked and saddened at the

closing of Kent On Sunday.

Your unique position reporting on events throughout the county in such depth and clarity (and in an even-handed manner) will be sorely missed.

In particular I would like to thank you for helping our protest group raise the subject of the live exporting of farm animals for slaughter.



This has helped expose the long and abusive journeys they are often subjected to.

Your reporting of our protests and the printing of our letters has been massively helpful to our cause. I am pleased to say that after six years of campaigning, this is now having an

effect at ministerial level.

We hope that this despicable trade will soon be legally curtailed, and much credit goes to you for your sympathetic and compassionate ap-

proach to our campaign.

Good luck and may fortune smile on you.

Reg Bell,
Thanet Against Live Exports

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KoS was the must-read newspaper

Bernard Ginns served as editor from 2005-2008. In a special article he looks back at what made KoS so very special

THE storm clouds were gaining fast, threatening us with violent winds and torrents of rain. We had little protection on Bunce Island, a tiny 18th century slave-trading outpost in the Sierra Leone River, some 20 miles from the capital Freetown.

We jumped into our ageing speedboat and tried to outpace the gathering tempest, but our craft was no match for the forces of nature engulfing us as we skimmed across the dangerous waters. Would our boat hit the rocks? Would we make it safely to land? What awaited us when we got there? And what was I doing here in the first place?

Kent on Sunday, the quality free newspaper, was the vehicle that had transported me to this beautiful but war-torn West African country, at various times a focal point of the global slave trade, a city symbol of

emancipation, a conflict zone of extreme brutality and a source of potential incredible wealth from a natural abundance of diamonds.

A decade ago, Kent on Sunday readers had responded with overwhelming generosity to our campaign to supply books and educational materials to Sierra Leone, officially designated as one of the poorest nations on the planet.

Colleagues and I had travelled the county of Kent by car gathering donations of books from readers who wanted to support our mission to provide a better education to the young people of Kent, a small fishing village on the tip of the Freetown peninsula whose schoolhouse was based in an old slave trading pen.

In all, we collected a tonne of books, including the collected works of Charles Dickens, some Ladybird



PROUD: In a memorable campaign, Bernard flew to Sierra Leone to deliver books from our readers

classics and plenty of school textbooks. I persuaded a kind-hearted shipping agent in south-east London to transport them to our destination, free of charge.

I will never forget the sense of excitement, pride and joy that I felt as I arrived in Kent, Sierra Leone, to deliver these books on behalf of our readers, believing then, as I do now, that education is the single-most powerful gift that you can bestow on any person on this planet.

Village chief Tunde Savage had a simple message for KoS readers: "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Tony Blair, then the prime minister,

also sent his congratulations, praising our readers' "fantastic generosity". Remember that Sierra Leone was the scene of his most successful foreign policy intervention. So successful in fact that many local parents named their children after him.

KoS was a great newspaper and I was lucky enough to be its editor from September 2005 to May 2008. I have many fond memories of friends, colleagues, subjects and stories that we reported during those more innocent times before the social media and fake news revolution upended the business model for newspapers.



KoS was an innovator; it stormed a market dominated by absent-minded incumbents and provided advertisers with a county-wide platform to reach readers who were served with some high quality journalism to make it the must-read title of the region. It was invincible.

I wish I could say the same of our speedboat. It did eventually make it back to Freetown with its passengers intact, in spite of a hole in the hull sustained during a forced beaching across the bay at Tagrin. Lucky, indeed.

• Bernard Ginns is now director of www.branksomepartners.com

A golden opportunity I embraced

Former reporter **Maria Chiorando** reflects on her time on the paper, her wrangles with the editor, and how she brushed shoulders with the powerful in a role she describes as "immensely privileged"

LIE is such a strong word.

But when you really want something, tinkering with the truth is a small sacrifice in pursuit of the bigger goal.

This is how I found myself in an interview making promises I would almost certainly fail to keep.

"Pass the 100 words of shorthand per minute exam? Easy. Too easy. I can already do it - getting the certification is a mere formality. Consider it done," I said, with a falsely-confident flourish.

Kent on Sunday was like no other newspaper I had - or have - ever seen and I was desperate to work there. Kent is a gift to anyone who wants to write - the vast and varied landscape of the county and its history lends itself to huge narratives, and the paper took full advantage of this.

The pages were filled with long-form features, rich in detail and colour, real writing about infinite topics. It was really special.

Much of this was down to the bril-

liant editor Chris Britcher, who some might say ruled the paper with an iron fist, though was always scrupulously fair.

My first week was full of mixed emotions; elation at being part of something I had admired, despair at my beginner's ineptitude.

"Britcher's face turned purple when I described an attack in a kebab shop as 'vicious and unprovoked' on the basis of no evidence," I moaned.

"He called me a blithering idiot."

"Obviously your classic editor type," my mother remarked - her knowledge of the editorial world gleaned entirely from films, but accurate nonetheless.

We butted heads on occasion, during arguments in which I now realise I was entirely in the wrong. He champions fair, unbiased, fact-driven reporting above all. A difficult but vital skill to grasp, and one that can be all too hard to come by these days.

"If you annoy people on both sides of the argument, what you've written



AIM: Maria Chiorando looks down the sights when we sent her shooting

is probably balanced," he often said.

Because of this commitment to quality, KoS was respected. The journalists were afforded incredible opportunities, given space at events when top politicians visited Kent. I was able to ask questions of people

like David Cameron and Theresa May - as well as every politician in the county.

Almost two decades of education failed to inform and engage me in the same way working at Kent on Sunday did. It was an immensely privileged

position, having access to political figures as well as the other people and events that forged the Kentish landscape.

But more than anything else, the privilege came from doing work that had meaning and purpose.






The end of KoS is part of a much wider decline in print journalism.

The internet is taking over, and it's hitting local media hard. In the old days, you'd recognise names and faces in the bylines. They were real people with a stake in what they were writing. Now there is less news, less real journalism, and more gossip ripped from social media. Quick pieces written by people with no training or experience of the real industry, their work riddled with the kind of inaccuracies old-school editors would scream at you for making.

It's the loss of a craft but it's more than that. Papers like KoS were once the beating heart of a community.

And once you rip out the heart - what do you have left?



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FIRST TIME BUYERS GET ON THE LADDER EARLY WITH SHARED OWNERSHIP

The average age of first-time buyers is on the rise, climbing to 30 in the UK and peaking at 32 in London. However, against all the odds, James Grant and Rosie Bolton have achieved home ownership at the age of 23. The couple secured their first home through the Shared Ownership Scheme, securing their dream property at The Wren Building, Oval Quarter by Southern Home Ownership.

Keen to purchase a home of their own, Rosie, an Advertising Space Buyer, and James, an Investment Portfolio Analyst, recently bought a 35 per cent share in a one bedroom flat at The Wren development in Oval Quarter, SW9. James comments: "Previously, Rosie and I were living at home with our parents; I was living in Essex, and Rosie in Shepherd's Bush. I was commuting an hour and a half each day into Westminster, and I was keen to cut this down significantly, so we decided to look into home ownership in London."

James explains: "It was always an aspiration of ours to purchase a home in London, but it wasn't until we found out about the shared ownership scheme that we realised we could actually afford to do so. We were delighted when we found The Wren, as it was open to all applicants, rather than just those living or working in the borough."



James continues: "Shared Ownership has given us the opportunity to own the share of a property that we can afford. Our monthly costs, including rent, ground rent and mortgage only come to £1,300 which is the same amount we would expect to pay if we were to rent. If it wasn't for the scheme, we would have been forced to rent in London, but now we have a tangible asset which is great."

The Wren Building is a collection of one and two-bedroom apartments, ideally located in Oval, SW9. James explains: "It is a large development and has a really inviting atmosphere. It's great to have a lot of fellow young professionals around in the surrounding area, and there is a real community feel. There is green open space in the middle of the development, with a café and a community centre, along with some sports facilities, such as basketball courts."

Proving ideal for city workers, The Wren is located within Oval Quarter and offers excellent connections to all of London's extensive travel networks. Oval tube station provides access to the Northern Line, and Stockwell tube station is within walking distance, providing access to the Victoria Line.

James concludes: "The entire process with Southern Home Ownership was smooth, and the sales team even put us

in touch with various mortgage advisors to secure the property. Southern were always on hand to help; they were easy to reach and helped to drive the process forward."

One-bedroom apartments at The Wren Building are available with shared ownership from £157,500 for a 35% share, based on a full market value of £450,000. For more information please call 0300 555 2171 or visit www.shosales.co.uk/wren.





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Unearthing the past as docks plan takes shape

Archaeologists have made fascinating discoveries as they look to reshape docks as part of £250million revival

By Chris Murphy
Reporter

WORKERS excavating the area around docks in Dover as part of a multi-million pound project to dramatically upgrade the site have made a host of fascinating discoveries, we can reveal.

Taking place as part of the Dover Western Docks Revival (DWDR) scheme, archaeology experts have unearthed remains of the original docks dating back to the 16th century and the remains of parts of Victorian homes that once stood there.

The ambitious project aims at transforming the western docks - which lie about one mile away from the eastern docks which provides the

town's main cross-Channel ferry terminal.

Plans include a new marina pier and curve to host shops, bars, cafes and restaurant.

In addition, there will be a new cargo terminal and distribution centre.

And the first few months of excavation for the new Wellington dock navigation channel, have uncovered some fascinating finds.

Specialist heritage experts, Archaeology South-East, were included to oversee the excavation which began in March.

Kristina Krawiec, senior archaeologist at ASE explained: "The excavation of such a large channel provides a unique opportunity to uncover and record deeply buried archaeological

remains and the sediments associated with them."

The first discoveries included the old basements of Victorian houses that once occupied the promenade which were built around 1830 and demolished at the end of the Second World War, during which they suffered severe shelling rendering them beyond a state of economic repair.

Further discoveries included the remains of the foundations of The Pent - proposed and overseen by Thomas Digges around 1570, under the approval of Elizabeth I.

This was the first successful endeavour, following many previously failed attempts, at making use of a natural shingle bar that often blocked the entrance of ships into Dover.

Josie Sinden, DWDR conservation officer at the port, said: "The installation of these foundations would have been a scheme of national scale, and as a result caused an increase on the price of tax on beer and grain at the time, in order to cover costs.

"The inspiration for this style of defence was taken from work carried out on the Romney Marshes and included packing the shingle with layers of mud, silts and chalk - materials all in abundance in and around the Dover area.

"DWDR undertook extensive heritage investigations and it was discovered the technique used to the construct The Pent was used extensively in the Benelux, or Low Countries."

At a much lower level below the shingle, a small wooden 'fence' was uncovered. This consisted of very delicate upright timbers with a woven wattle component. The purpose of the structure has not yet been determined; however, it has been mooted to be associated with fishing, an early attempt at a sea defence or an attempt to control the shingle bar.

Ms Krawiec said: "The only reason the timbers survived was due to their position in the water table. The original size of the structure has been very difficult to determine as it had deteri-



REVEALED: Wooden timbers dating back to 16th century are uncovered as part of the docks' revival scheme



PAST: The Esplanade circa 1905, adjacent to Wellington dock

orated significantly."

Approximately 250 timbers were also uncovered on the beach side of excavation and would have formed a sea wall with the timbers acting as fenders for the ships to moor alongside. The structure was recorded using laser scanning, and will be removed and stored for analysis prior to re-incorporation into the development.

A heritage steering group was formed in the early stages in order to meet the design delivery of the project's heritage requirements. This group comprised of a mixture of project staff and external archaeological organisations and is supported by a full-time dedicated conservation officer.

Dave Herrod, DWDR programme director, said: "The port's commitment to heritage goes over and beyond its statutory requirement.

"Recently the DWDR team worked with the Dutch Culture Association

and Historic England, to facilitate scanning of concretions found adjacent to the Dutch vessel, Rooswijk, which was recently excavated off the Kent coast.

"Celebrating our heritage structures is a key priority of DWDR, and this is just another story of how the port has developed and becomes sustainable for future uses."

The port said the £250 million Dover Western Docks Revival is a one-off opportunity for the regeneration of Dover, bringing new investment into the area.

However, it has not been without controversy - most notably regarding plans to remove sand from the famous Goodwin Sands off the Deal coast to assist the reclaiming of land required for the project. Campaigners say the sands are not only protected but provide the last resting place for hundreds of sailors and soldiers over the years and should not be disturbed.



BOMBED: Cellars from Victorian homes bombed during the war

Why now is the time to buy a locally grown Christmas tree

The county is not best known for its festive firs, but there is an increasing desire to have the centrepiece of your Yuletide season born and bred right here in Kent

By Anna MacSwan
Reporter

It may feel early to be talking about Christmas, but across the country, tree growers will soon be starting to harvest their Christmas pines - including in Kent. While the number of trees produced in the Garden of England is, perhaps surprisingly, relatively small compared to bigger players such as Scotland, there are a healthy number of Christmas tree growers in the county who often offer more variety than a garden shop. They can also bring cost savings.

And in recent years, they have been thriving. When it comes to Christmas trees, British consumers are increasingly opting to buy locally. Of the seven million bought in the UK each year, the British Christmas Tree Growers Association estimate that around 75 per cent are grown in the UK. Most imports come from Denmark, followed by Belgium, but this has fallen in recent years as the quality of British trees has improved.

Consumers in Kent are no differ-

ent. Nigel Harland, the owner of Garden House Orchards in Saltwood, currently plants between 3,000-4,000 trees a year, a number which has been increasing year on year due to demand.

Nearly all are sold directly from his farm shop. He explains: "A lot of customers come to us regularly every year. Word gets around, for example, through Facebook."

"People are becoming more interested in buying locally produced trees, rather than artificial - it's nice to have that Christmas tree smell."

Edward Barham, owner of Hole Park Estate in Rolvenden, near Cranbrook, similarly says that he doesn't grow enough trees to keep up with demand. With a six-foot tree typically taking around eight years to grow and requiring shaping and pruning by hand, it is a labour of love.

He explains: "We have decided that 10-15,000 trees is good for us."

To stay competitive, Mr Barham sets his business apart from others by growing a variety of tree species. While he primarily grows the popular Nordmann Fir, followed by the

more traditional Norway Spruce, known for its beautiful scent, he also grows more unusual varieties such as the Blue Spruce, Serbian Spruce and Meyers's Spruce.

He explains: "The Nordmann Fir is grown in huge quantities, it's a commodity item."

"If you go to a large garden centre it's very likely [their trees] have come from Scotland or Denmark. We have to do something a little different to encourage people to buy from us. That's why we grow a wider range of trees. It's no good trying to sell exactly what you can get in B&Q."

While the 15,000 trees which are planted at Hole Park Estate each year makes them one of Kent's bigger producers, Mr Barham says that this is small when you take in the national picture.

He says: "I'm a big player in a local sense. But against national growers I'm a minnow."

Of 330 Christmas tree growers in the UK who are currently members of the British Christmas Tree Growers Association, 13 are based in Kent.

Harry Brightwell, the organisa-

tion's secretary, largely puts this down to the higher cost of land in the south east.

He explains: "You have growers in Scotland selling tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands [of trees]. Land up in Scotland is cheaper than it is in Kent. The space available up there is the main thing."

Rob Shroeder, owner of Kingswood Christmas Trees, near Maidstone, took his farm over from his father in 1979, who had been running it since 1955.

Planting around 10,000 trees each year and having been in the business for decades, he says that, unlike the others, he has actually seen demand contract. He says: "In the 80s there weren't many growers in the area. And when the M25 was completed, it made it so easy to import trees down from Scotland."

In recent years, Mr Shroeder has been shifting his efforts towards making his farm a Christmas attraction in and of itself, in order to boost business. As well as offering to take people into his plantation so that they can choose their tree before it is even



cut down, which means "we can help to make it an adventure for the kids," families can also explore Santa's grotto on his farm.

It has paid off, with customers coming from as far away as Dover and south London, as well as the farm's catchment areas of Ashford and Maidstone.

An advantage of buying locally is that, with minimal transport and distribution costs, it can save money. At

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Kingswood, a six-foot Nordmann Fir retails for about £50, which Mr Shroeder says is usually about £10 cheaper than most garden centres. At Garden House Orchards, some are priced at as little as £30.

Mr Brightwell explains that, with the fall in the value of the pound since Brexit, the cost of importing trees is more than it was two or three years ago, adding to the appeal of opting for a local supplier.

Above all, though, he says: "What's important is that people have the opportunity to buy a real tree. There's no memories being created around an artificial tree. It's just going up into the loft and getting it out."

"Like every human, no two trees are the same. Whereas if you buy an artificial tree, your neighbour may have the same exact one."

He also stresses the environmental benefits of buying a real tree - which,



GROWTH: Trees grown at the Hole Park estate in Rolvenden

even if burnt, will be carbon neutral. While they are growing, they also create a natural habitat for wildlife.

"It's good for the birds and the bees around," he says.

Mr Barham, of Hole Park Estate, agrees: "You are supporting the local economy. It's nice to know that you are supporting local business - I always make a point of buying local,

whether it's paper clips or Christmas Trees.

"There's more to life than going to B&Q. You've met the man who grew it."

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SWING: From The Top is a collection of songs Du Beke grew up listening and dancing to

Sevenoaks' Strictly star lifts the lid on his debut album

Anton Du Beke couldn't be happier to be releasing the collection of classics

STRICTLY Come Dancing veteran Anton Du Beke releases his debut album this week. A little-known fact is that the ballroom dancer's singing career began at a church choir in Sevenoaks, the town where he was born and lived for most of his life, before making the move to London to pursue a career in the arts.

And he still has fond memories of growing up in Kent, telling KoS: "I lived in Sevenoaks for 30-odd years. I loved it, it was a great place to live and grow up. It's a lovely town but it's also quite leafy."

Although he has now moved to Burnham Beeches, Buckinghamshire, which he describes as "quite Kentish" and where he lives with his wife Hannah and newborn twins, he still pops back to his hometown from time to time,

where his brother and sister still live with their families.

Although better known for his foxtrot – being one of the few original dancers from the very first series of Strictly in 2004 who is still on the show – Du Beke has sung for as long as he has danced.

The album, *From the Top*, is a selection of classic songs and "something I've wanted to do for many years," says Du Beke. They include *Me And My Shadow*, *Putting On The Ritz*, *It Had To Be You*, *Fly Me To The Moon* and *Something Stupid*. It also features an original composition, *Nothing But Love*, and a rework of the Arctic Monkeys hit *I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor*. Backed by The Overtone and Lance Ellington of the Strictly Come Dancing band, it is a celebration of old school swing.

Du Beke said that the final list of tracks had to be whittled down from a list of potentials "as long as my arm". And he couldn't be more overjoyed to be releasing it. "It's a very exciting time for me. It's a lovely, lovely album. It's all my favourite songs that I grew up listening to, grew up dancing to. I'm hoping [it will make] people grab their husband or wife in the kitchen and have a dance round."

"Music and dance has been my world since the age of fourteen. I was dancing ballroom before Strictly was even a ghost of an idea. I had to be in work at 3am in a bakery and I would finish work and go straight to dance practice. I had holes in my shoes and absolutely no money but I'd stand in my one suit and a band would play one of these great classic songs and all my troubles would melt

away and I would be in heaven," he continues.

2018 looks set to be a busy year for Du Beke, which he says will see him return to Strictly despite rumours to the contrary, after he and partner Ruth Langsford, a presenter on *Loose Women*, were knocked out unexpectedly early this time round. "I'm loving doing it more than ever. I'm absolutely gutted that we are out. Next year, for sure I'll be there."

He will also be on tour performing 'From Broadway to Hollywood' with Erin Boag between January and March next year, during which he will also be singing songs from his new album on stage. The tour includes a stop at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on February 15 and 16.

From the Top was released on Friday November 24.

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All passengers aboard for the Heritage Transport Show

By Anna MacSwan
Reporter

CLASSIC car enthusiasts will be pleased to hear that the Heritage Transport Show is pulling into Kent Showground once again in 2018.

A variety of vintage vehicles, including cars, buses, motorbikes, tractors and more, will be on display at the site in Detling, near Maidstone, on April 7.

With exhibitors already confirming their attendance, the show's organisers, who have high hopes to make it one of the biggest heritage transport events in the south east, are aiming for a record 800 vehicles to be on display this time round. Originally set up nine years ago by a group of volunteers with a passion for classic cars, the show boasted 700 vehicles last year.

Kent County Agricultural Society, who are behind the show, will once again be partnering with the South East Bus Festival to exhibit a vast collection of more than 100 buses, both modern and vintage - which has proven time and again to be a highlight. Free rides around the showground in a vintage bus



VINTAGE: The celebration of heritage vehicles is in its 9th year

also promise to be on offer.

While boosting their motoring knowledge visitors can also enjoy a Farmers Market offering a range of Kent produced food and drink, in addition to a collection of trade stands and autojumble.

For those who would like to display a vintage or heritage vehicle, applications to do so are now open until March 9.

Heritage committee chairman

Steve Pike said: "We are planning to make the 2018 Heritage Transport Show bigger and better than ever before. In previous years, we have had vehicles manufactured as far back as 1922 and this has given visitors a real sense of how much motoring and travel has developed over the years.

"By growing the show, we hope to provide a more immersive experience of how far transport has

changed in the last 100 years."

Application forms to exhibit a vehicle, attend the show with a club or trade at the show are available now at www.kentshowground.co.uk/heritage-transport-show.

Tickets for the Heritage Transport Show will be £7 in advance or £10 on the gate. Children under 14 are free of charge and visitor parking is available.

X Factor star in Bromley

X FACTOR winner Matt Terry will sign copies of his debut album *Trouble* in his home town of Bromley next week. For more information on the event at HMV Bromley on November 27, visit www.hmv.com.



Festive wonderland

HEVER Castle and Gardens is set to be transformed into a winter wonderland again this Christmas. From November 25 to December 25 a range of festive activities will be on offer, including a drop-in with Santa and Twelve Days of Christmas trail. Details and prices at www.hevercastle.co.uk/whats-on

Jools at the Marlowe

MUSICAL legend Jools Holland is coming to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre with his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra for two nights in May 2018. Tickets start at £37.75 at www.marlowetheatre.com.




Xmas in a new light

AN ENCHANTED Lantern Festival shows off Walmer Castle and Gardens in a whole new light this festive season. The festival runs from December 15 to 18 and includes a lantern light show, enchanted trail, the chance for visitors to make their own lanterns and hot drinks in the castle. Call 0370 333 1183 for tickets.

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Back to the 80s

THE 80s are back for a night in Folkestone. On February 3 artists Go West, Nik Kershaw and Cutting Crew are joining forces to bring icons of the 80s to Leas Cliff Hall. Buy tickets now at www.atgtickets.com/



Kitson's back in town

CULT comedian Daniel Kitson is bringing his Christmas show to a handful of UK venues this year, including Margate's Theatre Royal. Originally performed for five nights at the Battersea Arts Centre in 2014 and then in New York, tickets for A Show For Christmas are available at www.theatreroyalmargate.com.

Marvel at comics

A NEW series of Marvel prints signed by comic legend Stan Lee has been unveiled in Kent. The works can be seen at Castle Galleries, Bluewater Shopping Centre and Castle Fine Art, Tunbridge Wells.



Help save Santa Claus!

YOUNG adventurers can help rescue Santa Claus, who has been transported back to the Middle Ages, at the Canterbury Tales visitor attraction this Christmas. Tickets to take a journey through the city's medieval streets are available to be prebooked for December 16 and 17 at www.canterburytales.org.uk.

First acts revealed for Ramblin' Man Fair 2018

By Anna MacSwan
Reporter

THE classic rock, country and blues festival Ramblin' Man Fair – which has seen thousands of rock fans descend on Maidstone's Mote Park for the last three years – has just announced its first confirmed acts for 2018.

The hard rock band Halestorm, who come from Pennsylvania, USA and released the Grammy winning single Love Bites (So Do I) in 2013, will be special guests on the main stage.

Known for their riveting live shows, lead vocalist and guitarist Lizzy Hale said Halestorm was excited to be at the festival for the first time: "We love playing for our fans in the UK and look forward to making some new friends too. We are ready to melt faces!!"

Country rockers Blackberry Smoke, who hail from Atlanta, Georgia and have previously toured with Lynard Skynard and ZZ Top, will also be performing on the main stage. So will the progressive metal supergroup Sons of Apollo, which formed in



2017 and is composed of legends Mike Portnoy, Billy Sheehan, Derek Sherinian, Jeff Scott Soto and Ron "Bumblefoot" Thal. The band's debut album Psychotic Symphony was released in October 2017.

Over on the country stage, Steve Earle and the Dukes will be headlining. The American songwriter, with a career spanning over 40 years and whose songs have been recorded by the likes of Johnny Cash and Emmylou Harris, will be playing a UK

exclusive set of his album Copperhead Road plus Hits.

The festival, which is rapidly becoming a key fixture in the rock calendar, will take place for the fourth time this year, on June 30 and July 1. More acts are due to be announced soon – for updates, visit www.ramblinmanfair.com or follow RamblinManFair on Twitter and Facebook.

Tickets (£156 for general admission and £256 VIP) are available at www.ramblinmanfair18.eventbrite.co.uk.



ROCK: Thousands attend the popular Maidstone festival



ROLL: Rock fans at Ramblin' Man Fair Credit: Oliver Halfin



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Hollywood lifestyle for the 'villain' of Bake Off

Canterbury's very own superstar chef will lift the curtain on his life a little in a new Channel 4 show

IT IS almost impossible to work out what is going on behind those steely blue eyes, as they gaze inquisitively at a quaking amateur baker over a dozen miniature loaves.

Paul Hollywood gives away nothing as he chews slowly and thoughtfully. Will the loaves be under-baked? Or might he raise a hand to bestow that coveted prize, the Hollywood handshake?

While the Wallasey-born wonder, 51, is best known for providing the culinary yang to Mary Berry's yin over six years of The Great British Bake Off, he insists there is more below the stone-baked exterior.

And he plans to share it with the nation in his new show, A Baker's Life.

It will take viewers on a journey through his personal and professional history, from his early mornings in a bakery as a teenager, to his first steps into the big white tent, with some favourite family recipes thrown in along the way.

"It's time for the public to see a little more about me," he says.

"They know this pantomime villain and what they've read about me in the press, but, actually, nobody knows who I am or where I came from. This programme was a way of exorcising the demons of the villain of Bake Off."

When we meet, it's a few weeks before he and his wife of nearly 20 years, Alex, announce in a joint statement that they are separating. But in keeping with his



JUDGE: Paul Hollywood on how he became a household name

inscrutable Bake Off image, there is no sign that there is anything amiss.

In fact, his manner is relaxed and confident and he is pleased that Bake Off's debut on Channel 4, with a fresh batch of hosting colleagues, has proved an undeniable success.

In his words: "It's done much more than I thought it would ... and we got a much higher youth audience than we did with the BBC."

In A Baker's Life, Hollywood treats viewers, used to his discerning judging, to a view of him being judged. Two Bake Off favourites, Val Stones and Selasi Gbormittah, are invited back to the tent to scrutinise him.

"I know how the bakers feel now. Initially I thought it was stupid, but as soon as they said 'Go' and it went quiet,

I thought, 'Hang on, I don't like this.'"

Yet the pressure of two pals with a payback agenda was nothing compared with the work Hollywood put in to cut his teeth in the baking world while sharing a Wirral bachelor pad in the 1990s.

His efforts quickly generated job offers from The Chester Grosvenor, The Dorchester and Claridge's.

"I believe everyone has got a fate of some description," he says, looking back on his career. "I think you make choices and doors open."

"I never set out to be on the telly, I never set out to be famous. I just set out to be a very good baker."

• **Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life** airs on Channel 4 at 9pm on November 27.

It's a scream at museum

HALLOWEEN may be over but Maidstone Museum's next late event promises to be a chilling one. Scream Night on December 1 will feature a screening of classic horror film Dracula A.D. 1972. In this take, Dracula comes to modern-day London and preys on a group of young party-goers. Visitors can also enjoy free entry to the 'Scream & Scream Again' exhibition. Tickets £10 from www.maidstonemuseum.org.

From BGT to the stage

BRITAIN'S Got Talent finalist Daliso Chaponda will be performing in Dartford, Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells during his debut comedy tour in 2018. 'What the African said...' is based on the Malawi-born stand up's experiences as a journalist and jaded newsreader in countries where the press are censored, and others with no libel laws where they can say anything. Tickets cost £15 and are on sale now.

See the Darkness live

TICKETS are still available to see the Darkness when they come to Margate's Winter Gardens on their 2017 UK winter tour on December 6. The multiple award-winning rock band most famous for their smash hit 'I Believe in a Thing Called Love' will be back with their fifth album, Pinewood Smile. The US band Blackfoot Gypsies will be supporting. Tickets are £27.50. For details see margatewintergardens.co.uk.

Christmas in wartime

AS CHRISTMAS approaches, Dover Castle will be turning the clocks back by nearly 80 years to give visitors a taste of life during World War Two. Every weekend from November 25 to December 17 you can visit a 1940s living room and see how festivities took place in times of austerity and hardship. Secret Wartime Tunnels and cooking demonstrations will also feature. Normal castle admission prices apply.

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New Year Party Break

Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight
Sat 30 Dec 2017 to 2 Jan 2018 • Quote: NG12-KOS

Union Gap UK and Joey and The Jivers complete a great entertainment line-up at Warner Norton Grange where you can welcome 2018 in style and fun. Add to this good food, comfortable centrally-heated chalets and a super seafront location at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, and you have all the ingredients for a party to remember.

INCLUDED: Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet accommodation upgrades available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking (Car ferry available for £35 per car with up to 5 persons)



60s Rock the Rhine Christmas Markets River Cruise

Boppard, Rudesheim, Mainz, Koblenz & Cologne
By Rail from Ebbsfleet or Air from Heathrow or Stansted
5 December, 2017 - Quote SP12-KOS

Join us on a fun and friendly cruise down memory lane as we party to 60s sounds with a star tribute artiste and GN's entertainment team along the magnificent Rhine. Our cruise on board the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl takes in magical Christmas markets in the riverside towns of Koblenz, Rudesheim and Mainz, plus popular Boppard.

INCLUDED: 60s music themed entertainment • House wine, draft beer, juices, soft drinks, water, tea & coffee from the bar 10am to 1am daily, and served at lunch & dinner • Escorted Return Eurostar travel from St Pancras and Ebbsfleet OR return flights from a choice of UK airports - supp't may apply • 4 nights full board plus cruise on the 4-star ms Swiss Pearl • Transfers abroad • Services of our Cruise Director on board



Isle of Wight Sounds of the 60s Carry on New Year Party

Warner Bembridge, Isle of Wight
Friday 5 January, 2018 • Quote: BE1-KOS

GN Holidays & Voyages are taking over Warner's Bembridge Coast hotel again in early January 2018 - our 10th year in a row. Our must-do annual party, for over 40s only, has guests returning year after year to 'Carry On' celebrating the New Year. With a packed entertainment programme featuring original 60s bands Union Gap UK and The Cufflinks plus The Beached Boys, Vicki Lambert's tribute to 60s divas, great food, Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every evening, and free car ferry crossing, a great start to 2018 is assured.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrade to main hotel building from £30pp • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry crossing • Free parking



Swinging 60s to Mamma Mia! Summer Party

Warner Norton Grange, Isle of Wight
Friday 14 September, 2018 • Quote: CN9-KOS

Jimmy James and The Vagabonds, The Fortunes an Abba Tribute Band and a screening of Mamma Mia the Movie combine as our fun-packed year of party breaks continues at Warner Norton Grange with a summer break celebrating the music of the 60s and 70s. As well as our star-packed entertainment line up, enjoy Free drinks every night between 6pm and midnight, a free car ferry crossing and Warner's quality assurance of great food and accommodation. Over 40s only.

INCLUDED: Free drinks 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights standard en-suite chalet - upgrades available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free car ferry & Free parking



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Architects, Jazz/Swing night with 3 course meal for 2-The Royal in Whitstable, 3 course
lunch & wine for 2-Pearsons Arms, Whitstable, Free Range Turkey, Silver & Special-£30
voucher, ABC Bouncy Castles Voucher-ABC Bouncy Castles 2 x Flip Out Tickets-Flip Out
– Ashford, 50% off Ironing Voucher-Ashford Ironing Ladies
£20 Beauty Voucher- Purity & Simplicity, £30 Beauty Voucher-Beyond Beauty, Free
Standing Wooden Reindeer-Nick Egan , 4 x Tour Voucher & Bottle Brut Reserve -
Gusbourne Estates, 2 x Adults & 3 x Children Leeds Castle Entry-Leeds Castle, 2 x Tour
Vouchers for Old Dairy Brewery-Old Dairy Brewery, Kiddies Toy Cooker, Scooter & My
little Ponies-Lorraine & Graham Mullaly, Lunch for 2 & Wine-The Milk House
and much much more. Tickets £1 each**

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3 wine havens

It's better known for beer, but Belgium's wine is rapidly becoming an attraction. **Georgia Humphreys** explores the Wallonia wine route.

My hands are already stained purple, but I can't resist grabbing another plump grape from the vine. I'm not in France, by the way. I'm actually just across the border, in a country much more renowned for its beer. Belgium is so synonymous with grain over grape that the city of Namur, about an hour's drive from Brussels, has a street called Rue des Brasseurs (Brewers Street) which centuries ago housed 18 breweries.

There are none there now however. Instead, we're in the luscious green fields of the Wallonia countryside where three trend-setting vineyards lie. Visit these essential stops on the Wallonia wine route.

1. Domaine Viticole du Chenoy (domaine-du-chenoy.com)
Where: La Bruyere.

How much: E9/£8 for a one-and-a-half to two-hour visit of the vineyard and the cuverie, plus a tasting.

Who you'll meet: 80-year-old Philippe Grafe only started making wine aged 65, but now produces around 40,000 litres every year - he sells to restaurants in the area or you can buy some from www.belgianwines.com/nl.

Tipple to take home: The Perle de Wallonie is a delicious dry sparkling wine made with three grapes - johanniter (40%), bronner (30%) and merzling (30%). It's left to ferment for 15 months (the same as Champagne) but uses only five-and-a-half grams of sugar per litre. Expect fruity aromas (peach, apricot), with a touch of lime at the finish (E14.25/£12.70 a bottle).

2. Chateau de Bioul (chateaubioul.be)
Where: Bioul.

How much: Hunting dinners

from E115/£103; new tours will be from E15/£13.50pp

Who you'll meet: Former comedienne Vanessa Wyckmans-Vaxelaire inherited this 11th century castle and turned it into an 11-hectare vineyard. After showing us around (she is the 5th generation to live here), Vanessa walks us up a steep hillside to snoop around the vines. The different varieties include johanniter, muscaris and pinotin (reminiscent respectively of riesling, muscat and pinot noir). With its beautiful Sleeping Beauty turrets glinting in the sunshine, it must be wonderful to live here. The doors of the castle are open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and Sunday afternoons until December 17, for a gourmet Hunting dinner cooked by Namur chef Stefan Jacobs. There are also plans to open a restaurant in March next year.

Tipple to take home: My absolute favourite? The Brut des Houilleres (E18.50/£16/50) is one of freshest, perfectly balanced sparkling roses I've ever tried.

3. Domaine du Ry d'Argent (domainedurydargent.com/en)
Where: Bovesse, Namur.



■ **Domaine du Chenoy.**

Picture: PA PHOTO/GEORGIA HUMPHREYS

How much: E10/£8.90 for a one-and-a-half-hour tour, including a tasting of four wines.

Who you'll meet: After working with his neighbour Philippe (from Domaine du Chenoy), young talent Jean-Francois Baele converted a weathered family farm into a vineyard. Set in a perfect location between the Sambre and Meuse rivers, it's on the same south-facing hillside as Philippe's enterprise, and the two men share machinery.

Walking us around his wine cellar, Jean-Francois tells us Belgium has huge possibilities for chardonnay, as there isn't the pressure of fungus, which blights other European wine-growing regions. He is already selling his produce - made from German grapes - to restaurants and retailers in Belgium, and hopefully

Luxembourg soon, but his ultimate aim is to crack the British market. I'm sure he will!

Tipple to take home: The full-bodied Le Boise 2009 (E16.50/£14.70) was voted runner-up Belgian red wine at the 2011 awards of the VVS (Vereniging Vlaamse Sommeliers), the professional association of Flemish sommeliers. But my top choice is the Rosee d'Audrey, the Ry d'Argent estate's first sparkling wine, which has the aroma of strawberries, raspberries and cherries, with a lemony freshness (E16/£14.25).

How to get there
Eurostar (eurostar.com; 03432 186 186) offers an 'any Belgian station' ticket from £34.50 one way. This includes a Eurostar train to Brussels and domestic train service for the onward journey.

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 reserve the right to edit all letters.

High standards of journalism

CAN I express my disappointment at the closure of the Kent on Sunday?

I have always thought that the newspaper offered a first class account of what happened in the county and, although there were obvious squeezes on costs, a high standard of journalism has been maintained.

Can I thank you and your staff for their hard work and, in particular, express my sympathy to those members of staff who will be losing their jobs, particularly at this time of year.

I am sure I won't be the only person who hold these views.

Jeff Tinker,
via email

KoS was always a 'beacon of hope'

WHAT a crying shame you are closing - the national papers are not interested in printing our concerns, only the Kent on Sunday printed without fear or favour!

Who's going to be interested that we haven't a housing crisis, just a population crisis, as weak politicians try to cover their failure?

Who is ready to admit the banks realised they overreacted and that the subsidies to farmers were just our own money given back and we used to subsidise them before anyway?

So much truth out there covered up by the national press to suit their own agendas - KoSunday was a beacon of hope.

I wish you all the best, you had an excellent paper of which you could be proud.

Phil Granger,
West Malling

EU coverage was handled fairly

AS this is the last issue of Kent on Sunday I would like to thank you for the even handed way you have presented letters regarding the EU referendum, in sharp contrast to the attitude of much of the media.

I would also like to congratulate you on your positive article concerning post-Brexit trade with Japan [KoS, last week], which emphasises what we in the Leave campaign have always known, namely that the UK will flourish outside the EU, as we turn back to the wider world.

Finally, in common with another of your correspondents, may I say that I would have been willing to pay for your paper, as it is fully the equal of many which do charge.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

LETTER OF THE WEEK



It was thanks to YOU this page was so good

I SPENT some time trying to ponder what sort of letter would be the very last to take 'letter of the week'...and in the end decided I'd take it myself. KoS' letters page has been one of the more enjoyable - and occasionally frustrating - pages to put together every week.

Never short of contenders, the messages conveyed by our readers swing from left to right with more force than a pendulum.

I once had a chap ring up telling me that he was no longer going to read KoS anymore because of the letters' page.

He complained that the debate was always about Europe or the government and why weren't we doing more about the state of the local roundabout.

I pointed out to him that if he wanted to write such a missive I'd be sure to try and squeeze it in. Needless to say, he never bothered.

And that is the thing with this - and indeed all letters' pages - you can only enter the debate and

change its direction if you engage with it.

For all the talk of how all discussion is conducted online in this day and age, this page proved that, actually, the weekly dose of rants was, in itself, hugely entertaining.

You may not agree with the whole Brexit debate which raged across this page for literally months last year, but at least it gave people the chance to get things off their chests and for responses to be considered.

I know I will miss this page a great deal. More significantly, of course, I will miss all the people who read and contributed to it.

I may have not agreed with plenty that was said, but KoS was always a place for balance - and the fiercer the debate, the more balanced it normally proved to be over time. Thank you for everyone who has written in - you made this paper just that little bit greater.

Chris Britcher, editor, KoS

Thank you KoS for leading way

THE closure of KoS was certainly a shock to the system, a real bolt from the blue.

My first reaction was, no point in writing letters anymore.

However, after serious contemplation, my conscience took over. Perhaps a few words of thanks and appreciation wouldn't go amiss.

The front page [KoS 12.11] is a masterpiece, the complete edition will be kept - always something there to remind me.

Back to the here and now, however, we must not pull down the shutters before time.

I'd like to say a big 'thank you' to KoS for the publicity it has given regularly to the on-going horrors of live exports.

Volunteers are now required to carry the torch please. The light cannot be allowed to go out - KoS has led the way, and it is a hard act to follow, but nothing ventured nothing gained.

When KoS bows out, it will leave behind a very commendable legacy.

Every good wish to the hard working people who have kept this

much loved newspaper on its feet for so long.

Mary McNulty,
Hythe

Online news just isn't the same

FOLLOWING news of your closure, I would like to say I detest using the internet to check up on local news.

I love the rustle of turning the pages, the smell of the pages and being able to snip out the odd piece to discuss with friends.

Not for me the ridiculous 'likes' or hideous emojis so beloved of the brain-washed superficial smartphone toters.

People like me, who love print, are being discriminated against in a grotesque manner.

Our utility bills, meter readings, medical appointments, financial dealings etc all have to be conducted on-bloody-line.

Passwords have to be remembered, robots answer our calls, try going online and we are bombarded with pop-up ads and puerile information.

More concerning is the fact that those who cannot afford the technological gadgetry are being marginalised in a deplorable way.

Val Hennessy,
Whitstable

And a classic rant to finish it all off

MY condolences for the end of your first-rate newspaper. I think I have had the last three year's editions.

Was it the nonsense written on this page by Mr Granger, Mr Duff, Mr Dutton, Mr Bullen and myself that did it? [KoS letters, ad nauseum]

But let's go down fighting. And to motoring issues.

The most ludicrous and lethal invention of this century is surely driverless cars, not only human error but computer error to cause accidents.

How is it possible to programme into their computer every possible contingency on any road or motorway?

What happens when a computer malfunctions or problems with the satellite and of course, drivers will be lulled into a false sense of security.

Learners on motorways! Compulsory lessons on motorways after passing the test, yes, then a full licence.

Driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs and mobile phones does not need fines. Take away the licence for 10 years. It would stop overnight. I have a feeling Mr Hudson would not disagree.

Farewell.

DR Hedges,
Chatham

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk



White Cliffs of Dover

by **Ernie Jordan from Margate**

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STYLISH: Arona is SEAT's debut entry into the fast-growing compact crossover market. Pictures: SEAT



Much-anticipated SEAT Arona hits showrooms

SEAT'S debut compact crossover, the Arona, is now in showrooms.

The five-seater baby sport utility vehicle, named after a town on the island of Tenerife, shares its platform with the latest Ibiza supermini and styling with the highly-acclaimed larger Ateca SUV.

There are six trim levels – SE, SE Technology, FR, FR Sport, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux – and limited-run SE Technology First Edition and Xcellence First Edition.

Arona SE, from £16,555, includes 17in alloys, bi-colour roof, LED daytime running lights, DAB radio, roof rails, front cornering fog lights, air conditioning, double boot floor, electric windows and cruise control. SE Technology, from £17,330, adds the connectivity pack plus, with a larger eight-inch touchscreen with satellite navigation, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, wireless phone-charger and rear parking sensors.

SE Technology First Edition also includes heated front seats, dual-zone climate control, keyless entry and ignition and adaptive cruise control.

FR, from £19,680, gets sportier 17in alloys, twin tailpipes, full LED headlights, sports front seats, selectable drive modes and sports suspension. FR Sport, from £20,450, has 18in alloys, dynamic chassis control and black Alcantara uphol-



stery.

Xcellence, from £20,825, gains keyless entry and ignition, blind-spot detection and rear cross traffic alert. Xcellence Lux, from £21,880, adds 18in alloys, Alcantara upholstery, front parking sensors, rear parking camera and park assist.

Limited-run SE Technology First Edition and

Xcellence First Edition models are also available at launch. The former, from £18,730, includes features such as heated front seats, dual-zone climate control and adaptive cruise control. Xcellence First Edition, from £22,020, adds a Beats sound system, rear parking camera and heated seats.

Skoda Kodiatq makes a big impression

Skoda has shaken up the large sport utility vehicle market with its Kodiatq - a big, roomy family wagon with style, space and value. Andy Russell climbs aboard...

GET the big things right and the smaller ones fall into place...sound advice followed by Skoda which kicked off its new sport utility vehicle range with the large Kodiatq.

It certainly got noticed, pulling in awards for its style, value, driving appeal and towing ability which bodes well for the smaller Karoq which is waiting in the wings.

Skoda's debut large sport utility vehicle, and first seven-seater, is a handsome, rugged-looking car that had record levels of pre-launch interest for the brand.

Despite refined 125 and 150PS 1.4-litre and 180PS 2.0-litre turbo petrols, it's diesels to the fore with 150 and 190PS 2.0-litre TDI models. The 150PS version will be most popular, offering manual or automatic gearboxes, front or all-wheel drive. In 190PS guise it's seven-speed auto, 4x4 and top two trim levels only.

The more powerful version costs £1,160 more but if you tow you might like the extra pulling power and it still returned 40mpg overall.

The Kodiatq is one of the more civilised SUVs with exceptionally



good ride quality, even with the SE L's 19in alloy wheels – comfort is more important than a sporty drive in this sector. That said, the Kodiatq handles well with well-weighted, responsive steering, plenty of grip and not too much body sway for a tall SUV.

Big on the outside, it feels even bigger inside with oodles of space up front and in the 60/40 split second row of seats which slide back and forth. Seven-seat models get a third row of two seats which fold up from the boot floor but are best for



children. The extra two seats cut load space – 630 against 720 litres in five-seat mode and 2,005 against 2,065 litres with all back seats folded. With all seven seats up, there's still 270 litres of load space. The Kodiatq has taken Skoda

Skoda Kodiatq

Price: **from £22,190**

Engine tested: **1,968cc, 190PS, four-cylinder turbo diesel mated to seven-speed twin-clutch automatic gearbox**

Performance: **0-62mph 9.1 seconds; top speed 129mph**

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*Model shown is C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £695 Advance Payment. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st October and 31st December 2017.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Section 48 Planning Act 2008

Regulation 4 Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

THANET EXTENSION OFFSHORE WIND FARM NOTICE PUBLICISING A PROPOSED APPLICATION FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

Notice is hereby given that Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd (**the Applicant**) of First Floor, 1 Tudor Street, London, EC4Y 0AH proposes to apply to the Secretary of State under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 for the above-mentioned Development Consent Order (**the Application**).

The Application relates to the construction and operation of an extension to the existing Thanet Offshore Wind Farm off the coast of Thanet, Kent (**the Project**), to be located approximately 8km offshore (at the closest point). The proposed offshore wind farm will cover an offshore area of approximately 70km² and will connect to the 400kV transmission network via underground cables to the National Grid substation at Richborough, Kent. The Applicant will construct its own substation at Richborough Port.

The proposed Development Consent Order will, amongst other things, authorise:

- 1 Offshore wind turbines and foundations (up to 34 wind turbines to provide an installed capacity of up to 340MW);
- 2 Undersea cables between the wind turbines, one operational meteorological mast, Floating Lidar Device (FLD) and wave buoys (if required) and offshore substation (if required).
- 3 Up to 4 offshore undersea export cables to transmit electricity from the offshore substation or wind farm array to the shore;
- 4 A landfill located at Pegwell Bay with onshore transition pits to connect the offshore and onshore cables;
- 5 Onshore underground cables (either 66kV or 132kV) with jointing pits, extending approximately 2.5km to transmit electricity to a new onshore substation at Richborough Port;
- 6 An onshore substation at Richborough Port to convert electricity from 66/132kV to 400kV, and up to two underground cables at 400kV to connect the Vattenfall substation to the National Grid substation at the nearby Richborough Energy Park;
- 7 The permanent and/or temporary compulsory acquisition of land and/or rights for the Project where required;
- 8 Overriding of easements and other rights over or affecting land for the Project;
- 9 The application and/or disapplication of legislation relevant to the Project including inter alia legislation relating to compulsory purchase; and
- 10 Such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions, permits or consents as are necessary and/or convenient.

The Project is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment development under Schedule 2 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Accordingly, the Applicant will be making preliminary environmental information available for consultation. Copies of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) may be inspected free of charge at the following locations and during the hours set out below:

Local Deposit Locations (to view the full Preliminary Environmental Information Report)

Birchington Library

17 Alpha Rd, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9EG
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays
(closed Wednesday). Saturday: 10am-2pm.
(Non-technical summary/full electronic copy available)

Cliffsend Village Hall

Foads Lane, Cliffsend, CT12 5JH
Please contact Melanie Rogers on 07817 944359 to make an appointment.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Margate Library

Cecil Street, Margate, CT9 1RE
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays
(except Thurs: 9am-8pm). Saturday: 9am-5pm.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Broadstairs Library

The Broadway, Broadstairs, CT10 2BS
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays
(except Thurs: 9am-8pm). Saturday: 9am-5pm.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Ramsgate Library

2 Guildford Lawn, Ramsgate, CT11 9AY
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays. Saturday: 9am-5pm.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Vattenfall Wind Power Limited

Military Road, Ramsgate, CT11 9LG
Please contact Melanie Rogers on 07817 944359 to make an appointment.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Sandwich Library

13 Market Street, Sandwich, CT13 9DA
Opening hours: 9am-5pm. Wednesdays and Saturday 9am-1pm.
(Non-technical summary/full electronic copy available)

Dover Gateway

White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, CT16 3PJ
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am-12pm, 2pm-5pm.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Dover Library

Market Square, Dover, CT16 1NX
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays
(Wednesdays: 9am-8pm). Saturday: 9am-5pm.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Deal Library

5 Broad Street, Deal, CT14 6ER
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays.
Saturday: 9am-5pm and Sundays: 10am-4pm.
(Non-technical summary/full electronic copy available)

Canterbury City Council

Military Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YW
Copy only available on CCC's website - www.canterbury.gov.uk/

Kent County Council

Sessions House Reception, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ. Please contact Melanie Rogers on 07817 944359 to make an appointment.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)

Sheerness Library

Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL
Opening hours: 9am-6pm weekdays.
Saturday: 9am-5pm. (Non-technical summary/full electronic copy available)

Essex County Council

County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
Please contact Melanie Rogers on 07817 944359 to make an appointment.
(Non-technical summary/hard copy available)



The opening times of those locations listed are at the discretion of those in control of the building and could vary to the times set out in this notice. Calling ahead to make an appointment is recommended.

The organisations and locations providing access to documentation as part of this formal consultation are not in any way affiliated with the Project or Vattenfall and are an independent and neutral party to the consultation process.

The documents, plans and maps relating to the proposed Development Consent Order for the Project will be on display at the above locations and times and available for inspection free of charge from **Monday 27 November 2017** until **Friday 12 January 2018**

The documents can also be downloaded from www.vattenfall.co.uk/thanetextension free of charge. Due to the size of the documents, a copying charge of £1000 will be made for reproduction of hard copy format of the PEIR. Further details in relation to the Project can be found on the Applicant's website at www.vattenfall.co.uk/thanetextension

The PEIR will be on display and members of the Project team will be available to answer queries at Public Information Days being held by the Applicant at the following locations and times:

Local Public Information Days

Royal Temple Yacht Club

6 Westcliff Mansions, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9HY
5th December, 2017. 2pm-7pm

Queens Road Baptist

2 Queens Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1NU
6th December, 2017. 2pm-6pm

The Turner Contemporary

Rendezvous, Margate, Kent, CT9 1HG
7th December, 2017. 2pm-7pm

The Guildhall

Cattle Market, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9AH
8th December, 2017. 2pm-7pm

Cliffsend Village Hall

Foads Lane, Cliffsend, CT12 5JH
9th December, 2017. 10am-5pm

The Astor Theatre

Stanhope Road, Deal, CT14 6AB
13th December, 2017. 2pm-7pm

The Botany Bay Hotel

The Kingsgate Function Room, Marine Drive, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 3LG
6th January, 2018. 10am-5pm

Local pop-up events during formal consultation

We would like to ensure that as wide a range of views as possible are considered in the consultation events. Several bespoke events have been organised, and in addition we are going to have a small presence at the following venues, to speak to people, discuss the project, and encourage wider participation:

Innovation House (Reception Area)

Discovery Park, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, CT13 9FF
12th December, 2017 10am-2.30pm

The Co-op

27 Park Street, Deal, CT14 6AG
13th December, 2017 10am-5pm

Bettshanger Park

Sandwich Road, Deal, CT14 0BF
14th December, 2017 10am-5pm

The Co-op

78-80 Station Road, Birchington, CT7 9RA
18th December, 2017 10am-5pm

The Co-op

Moat Sole Road, Sandwich, CT13 9AL
5th January, 2018 10am-5pm

The Community Hub (next to Claire's Accessories)

Westwood Cross Shopping Centre, 23 Margate Rd, Broadstairs, CT10 2BF, 7th January, 2018 10am-5pm

Wilkos

21-31 York St, Ramsgate, CT11 9DS
8th January, 2018 10am-5pm

Tesco Metro

25 High Street, Broadstairs, CT10 1LP
9th January, 2018 10am-5pm

Have your say

Any responses or other representations in respect of the Project should be sent to the Applicant by one of the following methods:

Website: www.vattenfall.co.uk/thanetextension

Email: info@thanetextension.com

Tel: Julie Drew-Murphy on +44 (0)300 303 3061

Post: FREEPOST: Vattenfall TEOW Project

Any response or representation in respect of the proposed Development Consent Order MUST (i) be received by the Applicant on or before **5pm on Friday 12 January 2018** (ii) be made in writing, (iii) state the grounds of the response or representation and (iv) indicate who is making the response or representation, and (v) give an address to which correspondence relating to the response or representation may be sent.

Responses and other representations will be made public; however comments will not be attributed to individuals.

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of an Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence (Licensing Act 2003)

Notice is hereby given that

POP Up Coffee 2 LTD

has applied to

Ashford Borough Council for the GRANT of PREMISES

LICENCE for The sale of Alcohol between the hours of 10.00 – 21.00 Monday to Saturday and 10.00 – 19.00 on Sunday's to be consumed both on and off the premises and the performance of live music indoors between the hours of 16.00 - 21.00 Monday to Wednesday and between the hours of 16.00 – 20.00 Thursday and Friday and a maximum of four times a Year.

for the premises Lost Sheep Coffee Unit 50

situated at Ashford Designer Outlet, Kimberley Way, Ashford, TN24 0SD

A register of licensing applications can be viewed at the

Licensing Section, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL 01233 331111 by appointment

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by: 13/12/2017

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THE M20 MOTORWAY AND THE A20 TRUNK ROAD ROUNDHILL TUNNELS TEMPORARY TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

Notice is hereby given that the Highways England Company Limited(a) has made an Order on the M20 Motorway and the A20 Trunk Road, near Folkestone in the County of Kent, under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order is –

- to authorise the overnight closure of –
 - both carriageways of the A20 between M20 Junction 13 (A20/A259) and White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
 - the entry slip road leading to the eastbound carriageway of the A20 at M20 Junction 13 (A20/A259); and
 - the entry slip road leading to the westbound carriageway of the A20 at White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
- to impose an overnight temporary mandatory 50mph speed restriction on –
 - the eastbound carriageway of the M20 between a point 700 metres east of the eastern overbridge at M20 Junction 12 (B2064) and M20 Junction 13 (A20/A259);
 - the westbound carriageway of the A20 between a point 300 metres east of Church Hill underbridge and White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
 - the exit slip road leading from the eastbound carriageway of the M20 at Junction 13 (A20/A259); and
 - the exit slip road leading from the westbound carriageway of the A20 at White Horse Hill Interchange (A260).

These measures are in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake routine maintenance work in Roundhill Tunnels.

It is expected that the work will last for a maximum of 5 weekday nights every 3 months between 20:00 and 06:00 (maximum period).

The Order will come into force on 7 December 2017 and have a maximum duration of twelve months.

During the closures outlined in (a) above, traffic will be diverted using the A259 and the A260.

The road closures, diversion routes and temporary mandatory speed restriction will be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the works periods.

M Taylor, an official of Highways England Company Limited
Ref: HA/A20/35/3/1504

(a) Highways England Company Limited, (Company No. 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

For enquiries, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk.
https://www.highways.gov.uk

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The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Pre-Assessment Sister - Maternity Cover (Margate)

Full Time – 37.5 hours per week
Closing Date – Ongoing

Salary – £29,500 per annum
Interview Date – To be confirmed

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse/ (or equivalent dependent on experience)
- Assessing/Mentoring Course or equivalent (ENB 998)
- Pre-assessment/anaesthetics/recovery/surgical ward experience
- Ability to initiate changes in daily service provision of Pre Assessment
- Able to supervise staff
- Able to demonstrate clinical, technical and teaching expertise

Pre-Assessment Staff Nurse (Margate)

Part Time – 22.5 hours per week
Closing Date – 01 December 2017

Salary – Dependent on experience
Interview Date – To be confirmed

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Minimum 3 years post-registration/equivalent experience
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Maths and English (GCSE or equivalent) grade C or above
- Minimum of 3 years experience in a surgical ward/outpatient environment with a broad knowledge and understanding of specialist surgical procedures
- Practical pre-assessment knowledge & skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Committed to providing a quality clinical service

To discuss either of these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Carolyn Flegg, Outpatients Manager on 01843 234569

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website: www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers
Previous applicants need not apply.

Alternatively, please contact Daisy Bannister, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 222690 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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Record smashed at Brands Hatch

Rod Birley clinched his 626th win at the circuit last weekend

Motorsport

By Tom Pyman

Reporter

KENT'S Rod Birley made history at Brands Hatch last weekend by breaking the record for most British motor racing wins - just two weeks after being involved in a 130mph crash.

Birley, 62, who lives on the circuit's doorstep in West Kingsdown, claimed two saloon car class victories in a Honda Integra at the last event of the season, to equal and then surpass the benchmark of 625 wins set by cult hero Gerry Marshall.

That impressive total has been racked up in a career spanning more than 40 years from the mid-1960s until his death in 2005.

Birley began competing in 1973 and much of his success has come at Brands Hatch, with more than 200 of his 626 wins secured at his local venue.

But this has been something of a landmark year for Birley, who chalked up his 600th victory early in 2017 and has enjoyed something of an Indian summer ever since, to close the gap on Marshall.

Upon reaching 600 wins, he speculated that it would probably take "a year or two" to overtake Marshall, whose photo currently hangs in the Kentagon restaurant at the Longfield circuit.

Birley was aiming to break the record a fortnight ago, but he tangled with a rival on the final run to the chequered flag and smashed into the pit wall, leaving him with cracked ribs.

The Ford Escort in which he has



CHAMPION: Rod Birley

achieved much of his recent success is also likely to be written off.

But back behind the wheel in the Honda, he managed to smash the record to great fanfare in a two-driver race with John Bevan, whose family prepared his very first racing car.

"I am really pleased that I managed to break the wins record at Brands Hatch, where I have enjoyed most of

my success," he said following the race.

"Quite appropriately, it was with the Bevan family, as George Bevan built my very first race engine for a Hillman Imp back in 1973.

"It's probably not the most sensible thing I have done, as I still have a couple of cracked ribs from the big crash two weeks ago."

Injury forces Haye out of rematch with Bellew

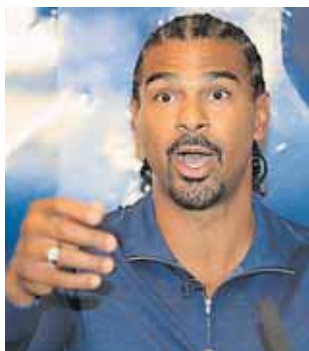
Boxing

BECKENHAM boxer David Haye has been forced to postpone his rematch with Tony Bellew after tearing his biceps during training.

The injury-prone heavyweight, 37, has withdrawn from the match-up scheduled for December 17 at London's O2 Arena but is not considering retirement and hopes to instead fight his rival on March 24 or May 5.

"I am devastated to announce my much-anticipated rematch against Tony Bellew has been postponed until Match 24 or May 5, subject to scheduling," Haye said.

"Despite the recent injury rumours, I was in perfect condition with an incredibly strong training



INJURED: David Haye

camp, weighing lighter than I have for more than five years, I couldn't wait to get back in the ring. I was ready to rewrite the ending of the

Haye-Bellew saga."

What Haye described as a "freak accident" occurred last Thursday, and led to a procedure on Monday afternoon that he insists has been successful.

"After a freak accident during a stair conditioning session, which I've done with no incident hundreds of times, I lost my footing and slipped," he said.

"So I instinctively grabbed the banister to stop myself toppling down the stairwell, in doing so I somehow managed to damage my biceps in the process. I underwent a procedure to repair it; this was pretty straightforward and my doctor and physiotherapist have no doubt that not only will I make a full recovery but will be able to be back in the gym to start my arm rehabilitation in two weeks."

Sport Shorts

Gidman commits his future to the county

KENT all-rounder Will Gidman has signed a contract extension at Canterbury.

The seam-bowling left-hander joined from Nottinghamshire last year, scoring eight half-centuries and averaging 34 in first-class cricket.

With the ball, he has claimed 14 of his 212 first class wickets and claimed 19 catches in 15 matches for Kent.

The 32-year-old said: "We're working hard this winter to right a few of the wrongs from last season and bounce back.

"My bowling will be a huge focus this winter - it has eased off in the last couple of seasons but I love taking wickets and want to get back to taking five-wicket hauls.

"I tend to bowl better when I have batted well and vice versa so I like to keep myself involved in the game with bat and ball.

Head coach Matt Walker said: "Will is an extremely experienced cricketer whose contribution within the group is priceless.

"Although last season was a disappointing one, I have no doubt he will play a huge part in the season to come."



COACH: Matt Walker



STAR: Mike Conway ended the season in fifth

Disappointing end for Conway in Bahrain

SEVENOAKS star Mike Conway concluded the World Endurance Championship season with a fourth-placed finish in the ninth and final race in Bahrain last weekend.

With all the championship titles already decided heading into the final round, Conway and his Toyota Gazoo Racing team looked to record victory for the final time against Porsche as the German manufac-

turer contested its final race before their withdrawal from the series.

And while Conway got off to a flying start in the #7 TS050 Hybrid, the team soon ran into trouble as the car made contact with the #92 Porsche GT, causing a right rear puncture and bodywork damage, costing them crucial time.

It saw Conway end the year fifth in the driver's championship.

Mambo No.5 shirt auctioned off

AN EXCLUSIVE 'Mambo No.5' Ebbsfleet United shirt raised £1,650 for charity this week.

During Fleet's recently televised National League clash with Leyton Orient, football fans sensed a missed opportunity when they noticed defender Yado Mambo wearing the number 18 jersey.

Instead, they argued, he should

have been wearing number five, as a nod to the popular 1999 hit by Lou Bega.

In the subsequent days, the club jumped on the social media frenzy as an opportunity to raise valuable cash for Prostate Cancer UK, and the XL-sized home shirt, with 'Mambo No.5' on the back, sold for £1,650 in an auction on eBay.

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Co-curated with Jo Dyer,
Animate Arts Company.

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EVOLUTION PRODUCTIONS

Image: Ben Roddy as Mrs Smee in Peter Pan, this year's Morlowe Theatre pantomime. Copyright: Tim Stubbings